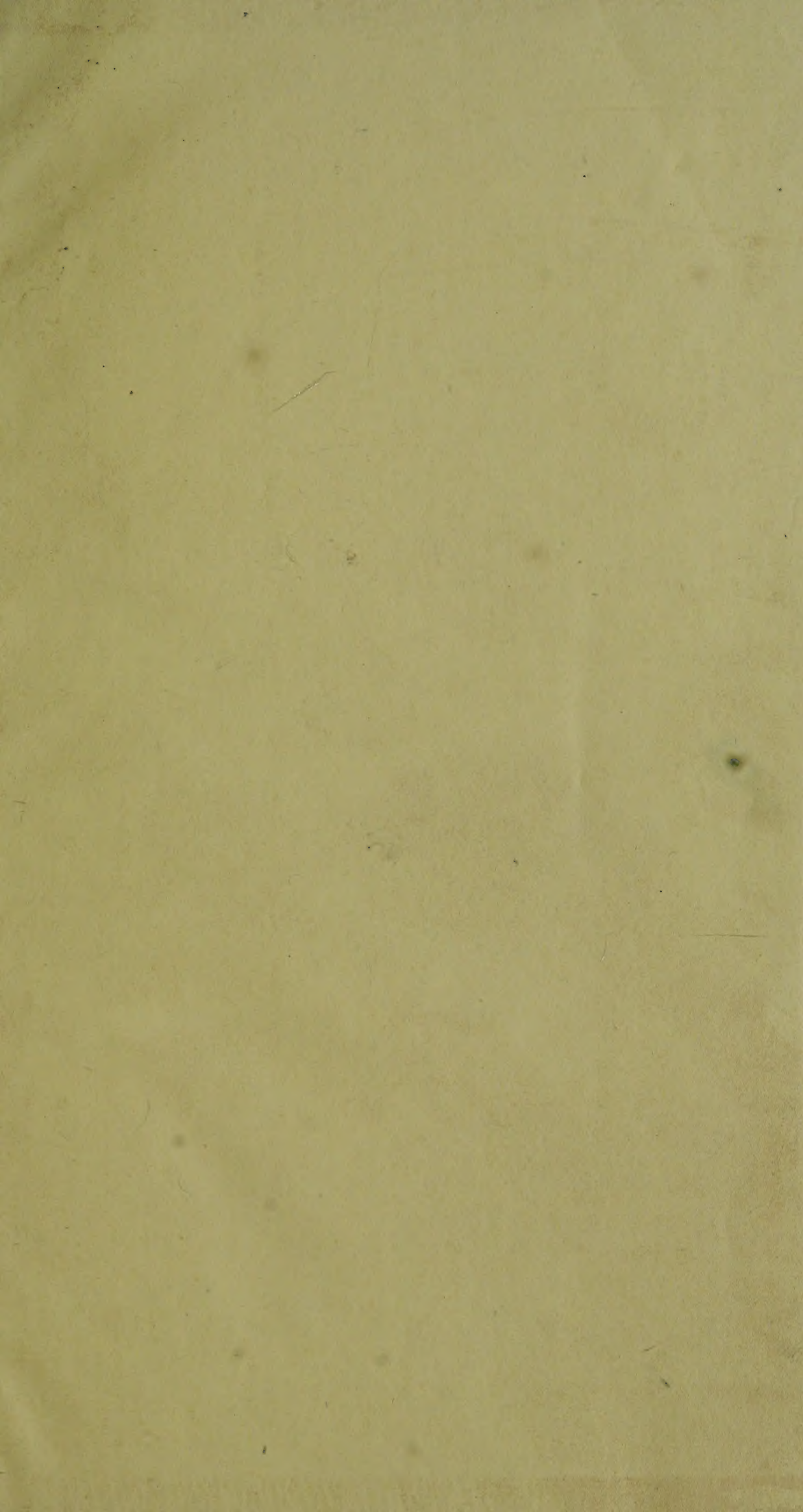


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HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

TALES OF THE ROADSIDE,

FROM THE PEN OF THE AUTHOR OF

A TALLING GENTLEMAN.

SECOND EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

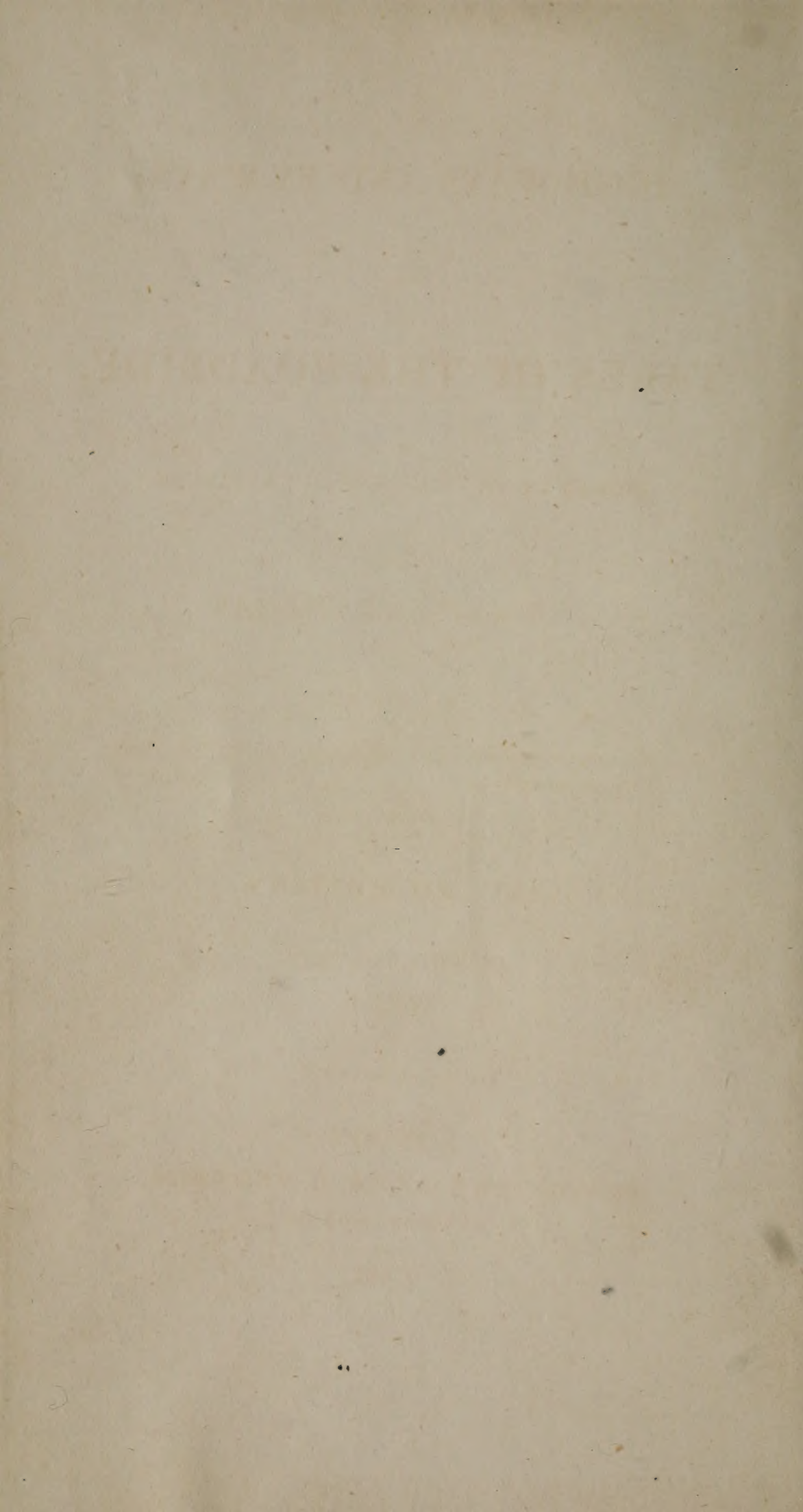
VOL. I.

LONDON:

JOHN B. LANE, AND W. B. WHITTAKER.

PRINTED BY

1881.





HIGH-WAYS AND BY-WAYS;  
OR  
TALES OF THE ROADSIDE,

PICKED UP IN THE FRENCH PROVINCES.

BY  
A WALKING GENTLEMAN.

T. C. Grotton (H. L.)

“ I hate the man who can travel from Dan to Beersheba, and  
say 'Tis all barren !” *Sterne.*

---

SECOND EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

---

LONDON:  
PRINTED FOR G. AND W. B. WHITTAKER,  
AVE-MARIA-LANE.

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1823.

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

OR

# TALES OF THE ROADSIDE

EDITED BY THE AUTHOR

W. ASHINGTON

A WALKING GENTLEMAN

THE FIRST AND SECOND EDITIONS

AND

SECOND EDITION

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY G. AND W. B. WHITAKER,

AVE-MARTE-LANE.

1853.



823  
G77h  
ser. 1  
1823

JUN 2 '52

WILES

TO

WASHINGTON IRVING, ESQ.

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,

BY

HIS ADMIRER AND FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

Gen. Res. Ray 6 Nov. 5 1864  
Ser. 1-3, added, 1823. 27 (ac, ser. 2. 3)

THE LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

TO

WASHINGTON IRVING, ESQ.

BY  
HIS FRIEND AND FRIEND,

BY

HIS FRIEND AND FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE, PROLOGUE, AVANT-PROPOS,

OR

INTRODUCTION.

---

“ The nature of a preface is rambling, never wholly out of the way, nor in it.”

DRYDEN.





PREFACE, PROLOGUE, AVANT-PROPOS,

OR

INTRODUCTION.

---

IF unencumbered men, who travel for pleasure, knew half the pleasures of travelling on foot, post-masters and carriage-owners would soon be left to the patronage of those who have the happiness, or the misery, of being married; to effeminate striplings, and old bachelors.

Who, with the life and spirit of youth within him, blessed with health, and sound in mind, would *choose* to waste his weary hours in the solitude of a post-chaise, or pay his money at a

diligence-office, in proportion to the speed which hurries him through all that might interest a rational man?

Who, with limbs to move on, and a heart to feel, would abandon the companionship of nature's self; encage his body in a public vehicle; and stifle the young buds of thought in its contracted atmosphere?

Can we expect to know a people by such flying association? Is it among travellers, every one of whom might on his journey doubt his own identity;—from the merchant counting on his fingers in the corner,—from the lover whose thoughts fly back in a direct ratio with the haste of his advance, and whose eyes are so full of his absent mistress, that he thinks he sees her in the gruff old lady, feeding her parrot on the seat before him;—is it from the friend, the parent, or the child, who, going to meet the



holy happiness of domestic welcome, thinks the carriage retrogrades ;—is it from these the foreign traveller would look for national fact or individual reality ; or in their random and undigested chatter hope to find a mine of sound and valuable truth ?

No, no, sir ! take your knapsack, and your stick, and walk ! Linger, and lounge, and loiter on the way. Throw yourself among the people, as if you came by chance, and not from curiosity. Spend a day here, and a week there. Be generous, but not profuse. Excite gratitude, not envy. Let information flow in gushing springs, but do not strive to force it up by pumping. Do all this, and a little time will show you how wise you have become.

I am answered, perhaps, that time is not given to all men in the same profuseness ; that where I have a year to spare, another may

have but a month. Then, I reply, spend your month with profit. Measure at the end of it the minds you have analysed, not the leagues you have driven over; and if you have but sauntered through one district of a foreign nation, in communion with the inhabitants, you are better informed than he who has galloped from Calais to Paris, and thence to Florence, Rome, and Naples.

But a crusty opponent might say that this is all labour in vain,—tell me that most men travel merely to talk of it\*, or that “*Voyager est un triste plaisir*†,” cite the Scotch proverb, “Sen’ a fool to France, and he’ll come back a fool,”—quote, gravely, if he will,

\* “La curiosité n’est que vanité; le plus souvent on ne veut savoir que pour en parler; on ne voyagerait pas sur mer pour ne jamais en rien dire, et pour le seul plaisir de voir, sans espérance de s’en entretenir avec personne.”

PASCAL.

† Madame de Staël.



“ Dans maint auteur, de science profonde,  
J’ai lu qu’on perd à trop courir le monde \*.”

and add to these authorities, that if the object is knowledge, it may be had at home ; that the external features of all countries pretty nearly resemble one another ; that towns and villages are composed of the same kind of materials ; and that man himself is every where the same, a two-legged animal without feathers. Why then go out of our way to explore the outward show of things, or even the nooks and crevices of human nature ?

Such reasoner would be quickly yelped at by the open-mouthed pack, which sweeps through foreign scenes, barking or baying at men or the moon ; and he would be stung by the drones who hum, and buzz, and flutter over all, but bring back not one drop of honey to the hive.

\* Gresset.

Yet there is some justness in the cavil of my cynic. Nature *has* made all things of the same stuff, and distributed them in nearly the same proportions. Man, the great master-piece, is every where the same: five to six feet in height, and seventy years of life; four-limbed and two-handed; with five senses, thirty-four cerebral organs, and one, two, or more ideas—as it may be. Such is his common form and medium definition. A straggling monster may now and then shock us as less, or startle us as more than man; but the lover of miracle and marvel seeks in vain for a group of Cyclops, or a race of giants. The grosser works of the creation, too, are all confined within certain limits. Climate, indeed, is comparatively cold or hot; but a fire or a pair of bellows can transport the mind, through the medium of the senses, from the frigid to the torrid zone, and *vice versâ*. Unsightly monsters, pillars, or even temples, may be brought to us by ships. We cannot,



to be sure, carry off mountains or rivers; but, if we will be satisfied with miniature models, let us turn to our own romantic hills and lovely streams, and we shall only want a magnifying glass to show us all that nature holds of the sublime and beautiful.

Yet all this is not enough, at least for us, who, laughing at the theories of the disparaging physiologists, believe man better than the brutes. To know him rightly, we must travel: not his stature, nor his deeds—description and history tell us these—but his mind and his feelings can be laid open, his resemblance to or contrast with ourselves be displayed, only by the actual intercourse of heart with heart, and soul with soul, when every artificial exhibition is gone by, and every cunning caution lulled to rest.

This is not to be done at home; at least I can never understand the biped of my own

locality. There I move as in a family circle. Every Englishman is a brother to the rest; and though one may grumble in a louder key, or another growl in a deeper tone, still the social resemblance is the same. I go into a distant county, and I meet new faces, but not one mind *seems* strange to me. I *fancy* I know all that passes in each round and honest-looking head; yet the brain within is often spreading a veil to keep its secrets from my view; and every idea coiling itself up like a rattlesnake, to hide its real extent, and hit me the hardest when I think myself most safe.

Thus it is, that by the confidence of the observer, and the caution of those he works on, by common resemblances and sympathies, we are as unable to know the character of our countrymen as we are to depict our own.

And in looking on the natural features of my country, the analogy holds good. The land-



scape, the rosy cheeks, and fair complexions, seem all to have been growing up with me from earliest youth, and to be identified with every hour of my existence. Every thing is familiar, because it has been so long within my reach; and though I may be absent from my proper fire-side, still I have passed no line. I have slid on in harmony and in tune, from *dolce* to *forte*; from *major* to *minor*; from the subject to the variation, and back again; but in three or four days, at farthest, I can be sure of sitting in my own chair, and of poking my own poker between the bars of my own grate.

But let me cross the channel, and I feel instantly the magic of imagination. I already breathe freer, although still in sight of Dover. I am hotter, though the climate is the same. I tread cautiously, and pick my steps, although the roads be of the like materials, or the soils be similar. I see mortality around me—flourish-

ing, decaying, dead—just as I left it behind. I look in the faces before me. I pore over, search, and scrutinize. I mark on every hand a novelty or a wonder;—yet all the while I am reading in the same old book, only that it is decked up in a different binding. But so it is. We want this stimulus to give action to our mental energies; and we find as mighty a difference between man in England and man in France, as we do between a plain mutton-chop and a *cotelette à la maintenon*.

Let us then travel; and if we do so with our eyes open (I mean the eyes of the mind), we shall return home wiser than when we set out, but knowing nothing more than we might have known before we started. The sum of all is, the defectiveness of man. The knowledge that let *circumstances* debase him here, or elevate him there; let him show in this century his fair side, or in that his foul; he is still, in all seasons



and all climes, essentially the same ; thirsting and toiling for perfectibility, but doomed, by the very nature of the struggle, to prove his irredeemable imperfection.

As to the prejudice with which we are loaded, it is the disease of our nature. Every nation possesses the virus, but we inoculate with it. We nurture it as an antidote against something worse ; and on quitting England lay in a plentiful fund, as if it were an amulet,

Sans quoi le cœur, victime des dangers,  
Revient chargé de vices étrangers.

But let us see our illiberality in its true light. It is the evil of isolation, and a tax paid for security. It is therefore, perhaps, neither a fault nor a misfortune. With its acknowledged possession we may safely say that, in many of the substantial advantages of life, we are superior

to our neighbours,—but are we so in all? That we have the unamiable folly to believe so is the fact; but this is not the place to examine its causes. It is enough to know that they exist, and that after a long course of culture, they generally end in the Englishman landing on the shores of France, louring and black, and charged with prejudice, as a thunder-cloud with electricity.

Every thing he first observes is a kind of moral *paratonnère*, to draw down the flash of his disdain. The lazy-looking people; the dirty inns; the beggarly appearance of the open country, and the wild uncomfortable aspect of the towns, with their formidable barriers and strict police, give but melancholy notions of French vivacity, liberty, or enjoyment. He hurries through these outposts of information, and reaches the capital. There he sees nothing but splendid misery and comfortless mag-

nificence ; palaces and promenades,—the one hemmed round with hovels, the other intrenched in mud. Thus viewing the superficies of things he gallops on ; returns by a different, or, perhaps, the same track ; sees in every new place the counterpart of what he left behind ; and, springing at last upon the pier at Dover, raises his hands in thankfulness to find himself again on the world's sole enviable spot of earth\*.

Another class, despising this species of traveller, and resolved to do better, set them-

\* I cannot refrain from quoting here a sentence of Voltaire, so much in the spirit of true philosophy, that I should have chosen it for my motto, had it not been in a foreign language. “ Si les nations de l'Europe, au lieu de se mépriser injustement les unes les autres, voulaient faire une attention moins superficielle aux ouvrages et aux manieres de leurs voisins, non pas pour en rire, mais pour en profiter, peut-être de ce commerce mutuel d'observations naîtrait ce goût général qu'on cherche si inutilement.”

ESSAI SUR LES MŒURS, &c.



selves down in France—but where? In some well-recommended town, swarming with their countrymen, where every thing—society, manners, time, and even temperature, are endeavoured to be regulated on the English plan. They meet French people, and they see French character; but the first in masquerade, and the latter in its worst point of view. A vitiated emulation is the impulse of the natives. They want the homely honest simplicity of rustic life, and have not the stores of information which abound in Paris. But they have pretensions to every thing, and are, in comparison to the capital, what a shallow pool is to a great river; reflecting on their surface the mightiest objects, without depth to embrace their extent, or force to bear their weight.

It is not in towns, then, we must expect to find true national traits, but least of all in French towns. Still one field is open to the

true observer—a country residence; where, separate from English pride and French presumption, he may display and look upon their contrasts. Here let a family fix; for if good fellowship, good-nature, true politeness, and heartfelt humanity exist on earth, I do believe them to be found in the quiet circle of such intercourse. That faults are even here is but too true; but what would we have? Perfection? Alas! alas!

But I want to write tales, not dissertations; instead of speculations, to give facts; in place of essays, anecdotes. I would rather shake a prejudice, than build a pyramid; and as a straw can decide the inclination of a balance, so, perhaps, may these volumes fix the bias of some undetermined mind. When I flung aside the staff that bore me on my pilgrimage, and took up the pen that was to note down a portion of its progress, I did so in the hope of contributing my

mite towards an act of national justice. The means I employ are humble; the pretension which puts them forward less than nothing. I look to public indulgence as the best antidote against individual severity;—and, knowing propitiation to be hopeless, must only, in the old spirit of peripatetic pride, throw defiance in the teeth of the academicians.



# ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

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THE unnecessary infliction of a new preface would be a bad return for the public kindness, which has called for a new edition of this work. I scarcely feel warranted in putting such a penalty on the indulgence of my readers; but I am in some measure forced to say a few words here, in consequence of remarks which have fallen from more than one of the critics, who have considered my book deserving of their notice.

It was observed that the work bore evidence of a prepossession towards the reigning family

of France; and objected, that questions relative to the revolution were treated with prejudice connected with that prepossession. The first of these remarks is no doubt justified by the tone of one of the tales, which is quite in unison with what I felt when it was written, three years ago. An obscure and anonymous author can scarcely presume to claim a sympathy with princes. He may, however, without any undue pretension, express a strong interest in the well-being of a nation. *That* I felt, and still feel, for the country where some of my happiest days have been spent, and many of my best attachments formed. Believing that France, just freed from a galling despotism, was most likely to enjoy security and welfare under the constitutional rule of the Bourbons, and convinced that such was the opinion of the great mass of the nation, I was inclined to let my notions on the subject exhibit the prevalent impression. They were strengthened by several

circumstances of an individual rather than a family nature, such as the heroic conduct of the Duchess of Angoulême at Bordeaux, and the subsequent murder of the Duke of Berry.

With regard to the *objection* before noticed I have but to say, that the subjects of most of the tales being interwoven with events of the revolution, I could not avoid touching upon the latter; but I never ventured to argue such topics as abstract questions, being desirous to skim their surface in their reference to particular results, rather than go beyond my depth, by treating them as general principles.

When I wrote, no idea was entertained, by any one, I believe, of the war which has since been undertaken against Spain. Feeling on that point in common with every thousand less by an unit, perhaps, of my countrymen, I have omitted in the present edition the only sentence



(and one quite inadvertently allowed to stand in the former) which could bear a construction favourable to that enterprise. As I was absent from England at the period of printing, I had not an opportunity of making this, and some slighter alterations, in the proper time.

I shall only add, that even this short statement should not have been obtruded on the public, indifferent to my name and opinions, had I not been anxious to clear up to my friends, acquainted with both, what might have appeared a contradiction.

June, 1823.

THE  
FATHER'S CURSE.

---

Who shall tellen a tale after a man,  
He mote rehearse as nye as ever he can :  
Or else he mote tellen his tale untrue,  
Or feine things, or find words new.

CHAUCER.





THE  
FATHER'S CURSE.

---

CHAPTER I.

TRAVELLING, as I always do, without guide or compass, it is no merit of mine if I sometimes light on pleasing scenes, or mix with interesting people. I have traversed France from frontier to frontier; cut across the highways, and struck into the open country; passed by where curiosity is generally arrested; loitered in spots unknown to Fame or Fashion, always yielding to the impulse of feeling, or the whim of fancy. Chance has so often led me into scenes of soft adventure, that I ask no other pilot; but had I made the most nicely-balanced choice, I could not have better suited my taste than in that district called Le Perigord, and the country bordering upon it.

Sauntering along the course of the river Dor-

dogne, I had left far behind me the mountains of Auvergne ; but I occasionally stopped to observe the autumnal sunbeams playing round their distant peaks. I dwelt on the recollection of the wondrous scenes they exhibit, and marvelled that so few of our travellers had explored their secret charms—until I recollected that they were inaccessible to the approach of four-wheeled carriages. They gradually melted from my sight, and new and different beauties turned my thoughts aside.

I had seen the Dordogne in the heart of those rugged hills—born in volcanic sources, nursed on beds of lava, and swathed with basaltic bands,—a riotous little stream, hurrying on its passage with the waywardness of a noisy child. A little further I had fancied it to glide along in the quiet and smiling loveliness of female youth, through groups of gentle acclivities, of wild yet verdant aspect. Now, I paced its widely-separated banks, and marked it swelling into full-grown beauty, rolling its course with conscious dignity along congenial plains ; while tufts of stately trees, converted by my imagina-

tion into enamoured lovers, wooed their liquid mistress with bent and graceful branches, which wafted salutation, or sipped her passing sweets. A little more, thought I, and this proud beauty sinks into that sea, where all rivers are finally lost!—and I was just getting into a train of deep analogies, when I was roused by the flapping wings of a covey of partridges behind me. I turned, and saw my dog fixed steadily at a point at some distance. I cocked my gun, but the game had escaped me. Ranger came slowly forward with a surly and reproving look, such as many a musing sportsman has observed, when the faithful follower, who has done so well his duty, would tell you that you have neglected yours.

In all my rambling I am accompanied by my dog; not that I despise the companionship of man—far from it. But where can we find a friend so like ourselves, with thoughts and feelings so moulded into ours, that he will think and talk, stand still, move forward, eat, drink, and sleep in perfect unison with us? This strict coincidence exists not between men; and



without this, such a course as mine is better run alone. Pursuits there are, and pleasures, it is true, which two minds sufficiently congenial may soothingly follow together. Hours, nay, days entire, of social fellowship have fallen to my lot; and I look forward with hope to a renewal of such intercourse, when ripened thought shall have mellowed the young fruit of earlier associations. But to wander for months in foreign scenes; to mix with strange society, yet be not a stranger in it; to give the mind up to that reflective abandonment which likes to revel uncontrolled, you must have no companion but your dog. With him you have no ceremony to constrain you; and he, poor thing, is ready for your every mood. If you are gay, he frisks and capers; if sad, he trudges slowly on, and thinks, or seems to think, as deeply as yourself. When you eat, he has always a ready appetite; when out of the reach of food, he murmurs not. Lie down to sleep, he is your guardian; rise up when you will, you will find him freshly at your call. A gun is the natural accompaniment of a connexion like this. It gives both employment

and amusement to man and beast. It is a passport for the woods and mountains; an excuse for idleness; a remedy against painful thought; and removes the mendicant and vagabond air from a poor fellow who journeys with a wallet and a staff. In France one runs but little risk of stoppage or impediment. I do not speak of the environs of cities, of fortified towns, or military posts. These naturally bring with them a train of ills—suspicion, petty tyranny, and insult. But in the happier portions of the kingdom, where rustic occupation takes place of warlike possession; where the fields are paced by the husbandman, not trodden down by the soldier, a traveller may feel himself at home. A straggling gendarme sometimes asks to see his licence, but a foreign face is nearly always a sufficient protection. As I, however, was furnished with both, I walked unmolested—a privileged man. Never yet did surly keeper drive me from a preserve; and often has the honest proprietor of some rural spot invited me, in passing, to kill his game, and share his dinner too.

But to return.—The birds were wild, and flew high in the direction of the rising ground which lay to my left. I marked them into a thick copse, behind which rose a young plantation. Thither I bent my steps, and Ranger soon led me to the prey. I got a couple of shots, and brought down my birds. The remainder of the covey rose wildly round me, and scattering over the plantation, I quite lost their trace.

The day was young and warm. I walked towards a projection which commanded a charming view, and afforded at the same time shelter from the sun. Arrived at this little point, I flung myself under the shade of an acacia, my gun beside me, and Ranger not far off. It was one of the sweetest moments of my life. I seemed throned on the very summit of repose. Far beneath me spread the fertile plain of Bergerac, bounded on each side by chains of hills, and divided into nearly equal parts by the broad and placid river. The richly-wooded landscape was sprinkled with cottages, and showed here and there the tall chimneys of a



château, rising among the foliage ; or the smoke from some humbler habitation, hid in a mass of chestnut trees, whose leaves protect the peasant from the heat, and whose fruit is his chief nourishment. Three or four small towns lay in sight ; the one from which I had last started just visible in the distance.

It was vintage time, and numerous groups of grape-gatherers were scattered in the valleys, as happy as they were busy ; for their joyous songs and bursts of merriment rose up from all sides on the pure and gentle breeze. A party of sportsmen ranged through the low grounds by the river, and an occasional shot came sharply on the highly rarefied air. The bark of an ill-trained dog, and the shout of the country people, when a partridge or a hare escaped their pursuers, were borne to my ear with a distinctness as perfect as if each group were close beside me. Many deeply-laden boats were floating down the river, gaily and unobstructed ; the helmsmen unemployed, and the drowsy passengers carelessly leaning over the sides. One solitary barge, managed by a

single boatman, was working its way against the current. Ungarnished by canvass or streamer, it formed a striking contrast to those which passed so rapidly by. The very breeze was hostile, and seemed to sport in the fluttering sails of the others, like those light and worthless parasites who fan the minions of good fortune. They swept in quick succession round a point that hid them from my view. Others came on, and were alike soon lost to me; but the single boat, working against both wind and tide, appeared, though ever moving, ever to stand still. I felt, that if I chose to indulge in similes, I had a parallel at hand: but I felt this without asperity or discontent, and seemed at the moment to rise above ill fate.

So still was the air, yet so clear, that the tolling of the several bells, as they chimed for prayer, or marked I know not how many hours, fell on my ear with sounds all equal. The hum of every individual insect seemed separate in the general buzz around me; and the very splash of the poor boatman's oar, as it fell upon the water, reverberated through the little grove

where I reclined. It is hard to say how long I should have lain thus listless and delighted, had I not been more forcibly excited by the tone of a clarionette, touched by no mean performer, in one of the most distant outbound boats. The strain came wild and faintly up the river, and thrilled through my breast. It was scarcely like real music, and resembled rather those floating harmonies which sometimes lead the dreamer through mazes of enchantment. I seemed to wake from some such oft-enjoyed illusion, and springing on my feet, I clasped my hands and raised them towards the skies. I felt as if the world was filled with joy and peace, and could not have been persuaded to the contrary by a host of cynical philosophers. Unconscious of my movements, I struck into the grove ; but as I trod its little winding path, the train of my contemplations was disturbed. I thought I heard low sobs close by me. Impossible ! said I ; this must be imagination : my mind wanders, and while revelling in one extreme, its fancies warn me of the other. I stopped and listened, but hoped



to hear no sound. It was however but too true. The tones of lamentation were repeated more distinctly; and, as I rustled through the trees towards the place from whence they came, I saw two female figures, clad in black, glide hastily from the spot where I strove to penetrate.

It seemed a vision of my overheated brain; and, without knowing what I did, I burst through the slight enclosure of myrtle trees and laurel. I found myself in a place that might be well called sacred. It was an arbour planted with flowering shrubs, each one of which might have attracted my attention, had not that been wholly absorbed by its principal and melancholy ornament. In the middle was raised a little grass-covered mound, surmounted by a small and simple marble urn. Two wreaths of freshly-culled and blooming flowers were hung around it. It bore no symbol of sorrow, but this short inscription, in black letters:

TO THE MEMORY OF OUR POOR SISTER.

Every thing looked as if just done. The sods were newly placed; the marble was un-

stained by even a drop of rain; the flowers had all their fragrance; and the whole scene breathed a fresh and holy solemnity. Wound up, as I had been, to the highest stretch of moral imagining, forgetting all that was of sorrow both of others and my own, the shock was extreme. I felt dumb and tearless: I would have given worlds to have spoken or wept; and I cursed the impetuosity which had led to an intrusion, which I thought little short of sacrilege.

The only atonement left me was to fly. I plunged again into the little wood, and, hurrying onwards, soon found an opening. I stepped upon a grass field, and felt lighter at every pace which bore me from the scene. Moving on, with eyes fixed upon the earth, and in a state of intense feeling, I had unconsciously taken the very route I would have left behind. I was proceeding directly towards the house, on the grounds of which I was thus trespassing. On looking up and perceiving this, I would have turned abruptly round, but was accosted by two young men, both in deep mourning, who

had advanced to meet me. They were so near, that there was no retreating. I anticipated reproach, if not insult; and my astonishment was great indeed to meet a polite and even cordial salutation. "Sir, you are welcome," said one of the young men. "Come in, my father has been expecting your arrival." "Gentlemen," I replied, "you have mistaken for an expected visit an unpardonable intrusion. Your father knows me not, and I entreat you to attribute to ignorance the fault of which I have been guilty." "If you are a stranger, sir," returned the young man, "you have the greater claim upon our hospitality. Come in, I pray you. You have arrived at a sorrowful season; but the day of woe has almost passed by, and our friends are now assembling to chase away its remaining hours." There was in the manner of these young men something so pleasing, of mingled sadness and courtesy, and the whole scene presented something so novel, and I thought so interesting, that I accepted their entreaties. They asked me to go in as if they wished I should do so; and that was the



surest method of overcoming my reluctance. As we walked towards the house, they explained to me that they had mistaken me for a stranger, whom their father expected ; and they quite removed my scruples by assuring me, that many would be at their dinner that day, who were but little better known to the family than I was.

I was still, however, not quite myself. The strong excitement of my recent sensations had scarcely had time to subside. I begged of my hospitable conductors to enter before me, and mention that I was a foreigner, who had wandered without plan or method from a neighbouring town ; and, in the ardour of pursuit, had followed my game too far. With that kind and unembarrassed air so peculiar to the unsophisticated Frenchman, they acceded at once to my request, and consented that I should gratify myself by strolling about while they made my apology. I thus gained time to recover my composure, and to examine the place where I was.

The house was small and low. Its white-washed walls, tiled roof, and green window-shutters, would have entitled it to the appellation of a neat cottage residence, had not its gigantic chimneys, disproportioned offices, and slovenly court-yard, presented a bar to the simplicity and comfort which that name denotes. Large, straggling outhouses seemed flung at random around. Implements of husbandry lay scattered on the ill-kept pavement. The annoyances of the farm-yard invaded the very windows of the habitation. Disorder, in short, seemed the governing principle of the place; and, while I gazed on the natural capabilities of its situation, I was grieved that so little had been done for it by man.

The ground lay beautifully sloping to the river at one side, and on the other hung the little plantation. A precipitous bank towards the side I stood on shelved down to a glen of most romantic aspect. A rivulet ran gurgling at the bottom, and wound its way rapidly to join itself to the river. The foliage showed

the softest variation of shades; and the sun, now sloping in the western half of heaven, flung a rich radiance on its mellow tints.

I could have almost relapsed into my former mood, had not the younger of my inviters approached me with a summons to the house. I flung aside at once my mantle of reflection; and, with a resolution to observe first and take time for thinking afterwards, I was ushered into the drawing-room. A number of persons, indeed a large company, was assembled. All were in black habits, except those who, I should have thought, required them most; for I immediately recognized the master and mistress of the mansion by their melancholy looks and the places they occupied among the surrounding visitors, although they neither of them wore mourning. My conductors presented me to their father, who approached me, and with a manner polished enough to mark the man of good breeding, but more sincere than courtier-like, he told me that I was welcome. He introduced me to his lady, who looked indeed woe-stricken, and spoke not a word. The



guests had also sorrow on their faces, but modified into different shapes and degrees of expression. I looked around me to discover the figures which had glided from me in the plantation, but in vain. After a few general observations I fell behind a group who were conversing in under tones, and silently surveyed the scene into which I had so strangely dropped. The furniture of the apartment particularly attracted my notice: it was all that Parisian ingenuity could execute or good taste select. The window-curtains, of blue silk and embroidered muslin, tastefully festooned together, the richly-wrought carpet, profusion of looking-glass, and splendid chimney-ornaments, assorted ill with the rustic air of the outside, and would have caused me more surprise, if they had not been in perfect keeping with that inconsistency, which is the most striking characteristic of every thing French. But in this chamber all seemed touched by a choice and delicate hand: elegance reigned throughout. No gaudy gilding destroyed the effect of the polished mahogany tables, or the piano-forte, which was placed at

the upper end of the room. The harp was simple and classic in its form. The pictures which hung upon the walls were chaste and exquisite copies from Italian and Spanish masters. The portraits of the family, well executed and neatly framed, had also their places. The likenesses of some I could vouch to be most faithful. Those of the father and mother were particularly striking. They seemed to have been painted in the early days of wedded enjoyment, for the costume might have been that of thirty years before; and there was a smiling play of expression on the lip of each, which contrasted strongly with their present appearance.

The young men whom I had seen were schoolboys on the canvas, with curly heads and joyous faces, standing at full length, a large dog between them, and altogether a fine and social group. There was, besides, a full-grown youth in hussar uniform, with ardour in his glance and vigour in his manly form. Three lovely female half-length figures completed all of the set of portraits that was to be seen; but one,

more than all the others, excited my attention, from its being covered with a veil of black gauze. I would have willingly penetrated its concealment, for I was interested in every thing connected with this mysterious spot. I thought I could distinguish beneath its sombre covering the flowing drapery of a female form. I recollected the funeral urn, and my anxiety was almost agitation.

Some of the guests accosted me with the civility usual in this country of politeness. One gentleman, more than any other, pleased me by his address; and the familiar footing which he seemed to enjoy with the family made me suppose him a relative, and, at all events, promised me a better chance of information than the affectionate, yet distant, respect which was visible in the manners of the rest. I attached myself particularly to him; and, in a short time, the announcement of dinner gave me an opportunity for the indulgence which I so much desired. We were ushered into the dining-room, where a table was prepared for upwards of twenty persons. I took care to remove far from



the lady of the house, beside whom the politeness of the family would have placed me. I saw the two young women silently enter and take their seats, while, shrinking from them, I secured a chair beside the gentleman whom I before mentioned.

We soon got into conversation; and, in answer to one of my remarks, thrown out purposely to lead him on, he informed me that the breakfast-table that morning had been as amply supplied, and as fully attended, as that at which we were seated. I ventured to inquire the cause of this double display of hospitality, so unusual in one day. My companion informed me, in a whisper, that this was the custom on occasion of the first visits of condolence after the death of a relative. Some few days following the funeral were, he told me, allowed to elapse, that the sufferers might in solitude give indulgence to their grief. Then it became the duty of the neighbourhood, even that part whose acquaintance was the slightest, to crowd at once, as if the whole fortitude of the mourners was to be forced into exertion on this single

occasion. It was, he said, the usage all through France that mourning visits should be paid in mourning dress; but, in answer to my observation on that of our host and his lady; he added, that parents were not obliged by custom to conform to the colour which marked the sorrow of the other connexions of the deceased. Exceptions were nevertheless seen where parents availed themselves of the privilege to bear the symbol of sorrow for their offspring's death; but *this* case offered no example of departure from the general rule.

“It was a daughter that has been lost?” asked I, my eyes involuntarily fixed on the crape-covered portrait. Before he could reply I saw that my gaze had caught the observation of a part of the family—it might have been that they heard the question. The lips of the young women trembled, and their eyes swam full of tears: the father blushed a deep scarlet, and raised his glass to his head, which bent as if in shame. I could have both wept and blushed—the first for their sorrow, and the last for my own want of delicate reserve.

Determined to restrain myself, I turned the conversation, and joined in that which became general. Every one of the guests seemed anxious to draw the attention of the mourning family from the contemplation of their grief; and the exertions of the latter were forced to the utmost to keep up the appearance of composure. But something seemed to lie upon their hearts still heavier than common woe: a deep sense of suffering, mixed with an uneasy support of it, was to be read on every face of the family. If the father for a moment relaxed in his endeavours to uphold the conversation, he started, at times, as if some inward reproach painfully forced him upon words for relief. If the young men now and then lapsed into thought, their fine countenances seemed to glow with the flushings of imagined disgrace. The daughters scarcely ventured to speak, as if afraid of the emotion that rose higher than their words, and was continually struggling for utterance. The mother looked broken-hearted. But, among them all, there was none of the dignity of virtuous sorrow; none of the resignation



with which the woe-stricken mind looks back upon the purity of a lamented object ; none of that calm condolence with which we love to dwell, in the days of mourning, on the worth and loveliness of a departed friend ; nor that melancholy garrulity which seems to waste away our grief in unavailing words. No, there was none of this—no remembrance upon which the weary heart seemed able to rest. All appeared a hopeless anguish, that wept in the bitterness of despondency.

The guests seemed actuated by a sympathy of agitated and obstructed suffering : their averted looks seemed to say, “ We cannot offer consolation—for we dare not tell you that she lives in our esteem.” Such was the construction that I put upon their manner ; and I felt that the contagion of this compressed and overpowering affliction had seized upon me too. The efforts to keep up the conversation gradually died away. Subject after subject was attempted for its revival, but each one sunk in abortive efforts. The dishes went away almost untasted—the bottles stood unemptied.

The very ceremony of assumed appetite was abandoned; and the whole party, as if with one accord, rose at length in silence, and prepared to depart.

My neighbour at table had, in the hurried snatches of conversation which we mutually forced ourselves to support, informed me that he was the physician of the family, and an inhabitant of the town where I made my temporary sojourn. He proposed our walking there together. I was glad to embrace his offer; and, seeing that he wished to take an unobstructed adieu of his friends, I promised to loiter without until he joined me. The visitors began to take their leave. They cordially pressed the hands of each one of the deeply afflicted family. Looks of sorrowful energy were exchanged, but no sounds were uttered. I silently stole from the scene; for I felt that my presence, though at first perhaps considered a relief, had gradually become a restraint upon the suffering and sympathising circle.

When I got out of the house it was yet day. Dinner had been served about five o'clock, and

nearly two dreary hours had elapsed since then. The sun was gone down, and the crescent moon hung in the heavens, transparent and shadowy, like a spirit of the skies. A rich glow suffused the west. The sun, in withdrawing his beams from the world, appeared to have shed a parting blessing on it, for every thing breathed a luscious and mellow complacency. The busy sounds of the morning were hushed : the call of the scattered coveys, or the chirping of the quails, was the only interruption to the stillness of the hour. My mind, however, was not at first in harmony with this repose of nature : the scene I had just left unfitted me for its enjoyment ; and I thought that thunder and storm would have better suited my soul's temper : but in a little while the witchery of nature lulled to rest the gloomy spirits by which I was haunted. In proportion as my breast received the impressions of external loveliness, it seemed to swell with the desire of giving them vent. Heaven knows it was not a moment favourable to composition ; and that, I trust, will be borne in mind by the reader of the



following verses, scribbled with my pencil on the spot :

## I.

How sweet to range a lonely wood  
When the mind is tuned to solitude,  
And summer's garish tints are fled,  
And the autumn leaves are falling—  
Where a rough cascade o'er its rocky bed  
With an angry sound is brawling:—

## II.

Or on some mountain's heath-clad side,  
As the sun yields up his blush of pride,  
And roseate beams o'er the landscape roll  
At the hour when day is closing ;  
And the eye and the soul o'er the beauteous whole  
Are in mutual calm reposing—

## III.

When through the grove a plaintive breeze  
Bears a pure perfume from the trees,  
And we suck the wild thyme's luscious breath,  
And sigh for the flow'rets blighted  
Of some blooming wreath, where the hand of death  
Spared nought which our hearts delighted.

## IV.

'Tis ever thus:—with ruthless grasp  
He comes to loosen the firm clasp

Which folds those objects loved the best;  
And then o'er each mourner hovers,  
Whose parch'd lips press'd, make the grave's cold breast  
Less chill than the form it covers.

I was just in the act of closing my tablets, when my new-formed acquaintance joined me, and we immediately set off arm in arm, Ranger following at a respectful distance. I quickly learned from my companion, that he was not only the physician, but also the confidential friend of the family we were leaving behind; but he said that he considered it no breach of his double trust to give me some information respecting persons whose situation must have deeply excited my curiosity. On the contrary, he thought it more in their interest that he should make me acquainted with circumstances which were known to all the country, than leave me to hear them from mingled ignorance and exaggeration, or the gossip of a public table.

I requested him to give me the detail of all that was not secret in the sorrow of his friends; and he immediately proceeded to do so, answering my inquiries with minuteness, and

making me fully acquainted with their sad solicitudes. It was three leagues to the town to which we were bound. We walked slowly in the mellow moonlight; yet we had to loiter in the suburb, to allow my narrator to finish his story. When he had ended, and that nothing more was to be elicited from him, we parted. The moon was high in heaven when I heard the hollow sounds of his footsteps dying away in the distance, as he reached his residence. The beams of morning were crimsoning the east before I flung myself on the bed in my little inn, after a night of sensation more than commonly painful.

Many months have gone by since I listened to that sad recital, and time and absence have worn down much of the first impression it made upon me; but although the vividness of the detail is past, and the scene which I have attempted to describe has lost the freshness of its real existence, still, if I can but throw a faint portion of reality into the outline which I now sit down to draw, I think enough will be done to impart some interest to it.



## CHAPTER II.

THE father of this unhappy family was a man of small but independent fortune. He farmed his own estate, which produced, probably, six hundred pounds a year, and on this income lived respectably and well; educating his children, entertaining his neighbours, and giving freely to the poor.

This is an enviable state of living to the man who can consent to be happy in retirement, and sighs not for the distinctions and disappointments of the world. Such a man was Mr. Le Vasseur; but even his choice was subject to its miseries. The Revolution had strongly excited the hopes of this gentleman, for he had none of the abuses of hereditary rank to uphold. He was of a respectable family, but not of distinguished birth; and he saw, like many another ardent spirit, the promise of terrestrial bliss in the overthrow of those distinctions which held a barrier to the advance of lowly worth. He

had gone to Paris immediately after having married an amiable and accomplished woman, and he there expected the realisation of his visions of universal good. A little while dissolved this delusive hope. The excesses of liberty appeared to him to offer no security even to a freeman; and, still a firm republican in heart, he withdrew from the agitated scene.

He retired to his little paternal inheritance; looked on at the distant horrors of the times, and strove to keep the torrent beyond the pale of his own social circle. He had considerable influence in the neighbourhood, from the respectability and steadiness of his conduct. A rigid virtue appeared to guide him in every thing; and if he sometimes erred, it was in judgment, not in heart. In the days of fury, he formed a happy contrast to the monsters who were abroad. He was a warm friend of liberty, but as firm as he was warm. He was one of the many who could see the road between despotism and anarchy; but he was also one of the very few who had the strength and virtue to follow it. He loved freedom, and had

drunk deeply in its delicious fountains, but not to intoxication; and he shrunk back from the debauchery of less-guarded votaries. Such was the public man.

In private life he was consistent. He was an excellent husband and master; and as years grew upon him, he became a wisely-affectionate father. But Le Vasseur was unfortunately tinctured with the infidelity of the times. He had followed in his early years the course of sophistry lectured on by some eminent professors, and was a rash disciple of a very unworthy philosophy. He thought man capable of perfection; and in following this phantom, he was forced to sacrifice many of the best, though perhaps the least imposing of human feelings.

He wished to form his character on the model of ancient example; but, like all who aim at forcing feeling from its natural channels, he was the frequent prey of very violent suffering. He would be stoical, but nature had made him tender. In his rigid view of right, he discarded mercy. Rejecting the pleadings



of the heart, he placed his whole reliance upon reason; but as reason ripened, he became sensible of its unsoundness. When he saw this god of men's idolatry raised to what they were pleased to call its place, he saw that it had neither the power nor the privileges of divinity: that instead of men obeying its judgments, they were by no means unanimous in their interpretation of its laws: that while every mouth was an oracle, the attributes of the deity could never be explained:—and while he gazed upon the naked strumpet paraded through the streets, in triumphant personification of the immortal mind, he started back, and asked himself if it was a dream.

This cured him of his first disorder. He fled in disgust, and turned his thoughts towards the formation of a little mental digest, which was to be the essence of all that was wise and good. Plato, Aristotle, and many other speculators, lent their aid to his researches; but one lawgiver was rejected by involuntary impulse. He had been too long taught to discard

Christianity, to be capable, if he wished, of looking there for precept. Through the absurdities with which it has been obscured by mortal frailty, he could not distinguish the still upright splendour of the principle itself; yet he suffered his children to grow up in its profession, because it was the re-established form. But the young people saw in his negative approval of its doctrines all the coldness of restraint; and Le Vasseur, perceiving that his example was robbing them of their best support against impetuous desires, found himself forced to a more rigid censorship; and he was imperceptibly degenerating into the tyrant over his free-born children. They felt this, and, though they feared him, they did not love him; because indulgence proceeding from well-regulated affection is the only foundation on which the regard of children can be built.

The young Le Vasseurs were highly favoured by nature. Each particular temper showed in varying shades much that is bright and beautiful in the human disposition; and

had these materials been kept together by strong principle, perfection would be less a mockery than it is. But such moral cement was wanting. The boys would all have rushed up to the cannon's mouth. Intrepidity ran current in their veins ; yet the life-blood was not warmer than their tenderness of heart. They felt life to be possessed for the benefit of their country. They smiled in involuntary good-breeding, and bowed low if a stranger gave them salutation, or if an inferior came across their path ; but if a pampered son of pride held up his countenance, and *claimed* respect, they felt a self-knit frown upon their brows, and an involuntary curl upon their lips.

Such was the fair side of the characters of these young men, and such I believe to be the better character of the country. But they had no integrity of soul on which they could rest in misfortune, and from which they might smile at fate. They had no settled principle of right, nor any well-organised notions of wrong. When they went astray, it seemed as if by rule. If



they were correct, it was like chance. Fine feelings and good actions seemed to spring up spontaneously, and in their own despite; while looseness of life seemed worked into a settled code of conduct.

This wondrous inconsistency in individuals is to be met with every where; but it is in France alone that it appears as the national character. Other countries are strikingly moral, or the contrary; and a whole people is distinguished, as well as individuals, by the epithets good or bad: but those who have had any intercourse with the French mind, know how difficult it is to say which character predominates.

The convulsions of the Revolution threw every thing back into its original chaos. Mind was confounded with matter; and social institutions mingled in a common ruin with the elementary principles on which order had been raised. Conjugal faith became a mockery, and virgin coyness a reproach. Woman was sunk as low as she had been in the worst state of

Grecian society, under the sway of the Sophists; while the flagitious doctrines of that sect came now into practical reaction.

The influence of the government was a powerful engine in sapping the foundations of female chastity. The making marriage merely a civil obligation was striking a death-blow to its solemnity; and the protection afforded to public debauchery made private misconduct a matter of course. The looseness of their literature; the passion for classical illustration; the taste for statuary—in all its dignified indecency—these, and a thousand other combining causes, broke through the barriers of natural modesty; and became the more irresistible, because breathing the intoxicating odours of elegance, and covered by the glittering yet flimsy veil of sentiment.

I am not endeavouring to palliate the general impurity, but I wish to establish some excuse for particular instances of error: not offering incense at the shrine of guilt, but striving to excite compassion for some of the victims of its worship. If I had not been able to do this, I

should not have taken in hand the story of Le Vasseur. It was not, however, his fault, if the contagion reached his doors. He struggled hard, but it was against the stream; and he had no strength but what was barely enough to keep himself from sinking.

In the whole neighbourhood there were no young women so much admired as were his daughters, nor any who merited more to be so. They were beautiful, accomplished, and pleasing. They danced and sung better than most of their companions; and had other advantages, which the majority could not procure. Their father's wealth, for so his income was considered in their neighbourhood, enabled him to procure for his children masters in music and drawing; and they profited as much as possible by this indulgence. He had himself much taste for the arts. His walls were covered with good pictures and engravings; and the chambers and gardens were furnished with casts from the best statues of antiquity. The subjects of all these ornaments were classical; and Le Vasseur loved to instil into his



children notions of republican virtue through the medium of objects which might at once direct and cultivate their taste. The consequence was in some measure what he wished. They grew up in the warmth of republican principle; but they did not feel inclined to become themselves the parallels of all its effects. The sons almost deified the second Brutus, but they thought of the first with horror. The daughters sympathised with the heroic sternness of the Spartan mother, but they turned from Virginius as from a monster.

The hospitality of the house brought continual visitors, and, amongst others, the officers of the cavalry regiments stationed in the neighbouring town. These officers were the greatest attraction which the neighbourhood afforded for the young of both sexes. They danced and flirted in a style quite different, and rode and shot in a manner very much superior to the rustic youth around. They were, of course, every where well received, and at some houses constant guests. During the late war in Spain, the regiments were continually changed; and

this being one of the principal cavalry stations on the high road from Paris to Bayonne, troops of that description were in frequent movement from all sides of this part of France.

The two elder daughters of Le Vasseur had now grown up to be marriageable, and two other sisters were fast approaching to womanhood. But as they had all hitherto escaped any serious attachment, their father began to hope that they would finally fix their affections on some of the neighbouring youth; who, though less captivating, had many more solid claims to their regard. But in this respect he was too sanguine; for the young people, though free from any dangerous impression, had sufficiently relished the refinement of their military acquaintances to have become extremely fastidious with respect to the others. The casual appearance of the few officers who now had leisure to cultivate the knowledge of the neighbourhood was rather discouraged by their still hospitable but circumspect entertainer, who brought as much as possible his country friends around him. This change was little approved

of by the younger members of the family; and the mother, who lived in the happiness of her children, ventured occasionally to remonstrate with her more prudent husband, but in vain.

The eldest son was now seventeen; and it was determined, in compliance with his own wish, that he should get an appointment in one of the regiments ordered for Spain, and which contained some of his favourite friends. The appointment was procured; and the young hero, after taking an affectionate leave of his family, set off for the frontiers. This was a day of great sadness to those who were left behind. The mother and sisters wept incessantly, and the two younger boys felt wretched at the better fortune of him who, by two or three years' seniority, had flung them so much into insignificance. They sighed for manhood, and the fine uniform of their brother, and built castles together for treasuring up the glory which was to come.

This event made some relaxation necessary to all; for even the father felt his stoical firmness somewhat shaken by the separation from



his child. The young Le Vasseur was almost choked with tears; but, as he pressed his father's hand to his lips, he sobbed out assurances that he should not be an atom the worse soldier for that weakness—and he was not. On the contrary, he was the better soldier for it, because it softened down the courage of the animal into the as brave but more considerate resolution of the man. He distinguished himself in many a bloody encounter by his boldness, and as often by his humanity. In the scenes of horror, which the Spanish war brought every day before his eyes, he only saw fresh reasons for the cultivation of merciful feelings, and left it to others to draw from them arguments for cruelty. But I am anticipating.

## CHAPTER III.

AMONG the guests which the renewed conviviality of Le Vasseur's mansion brought together, was a young man named St. Croix, who having, like most others of his countrymen, embraced a military life, had just returned from Spain in consequence of a severe wound, and was then residing with his father, who was a neighbouring proprietor of equal property and nearly similar principles with Le Vasseur himself. This young man was at all times engaging and interesting, but particularly so at this period, from his having so recently quitted a country to which the attention of his friends was so particularly directed. The intimacy of his boyish days, before he had entered upon his worldly career, was now renewed, and to Le Vasseur's family party he became, in fact, an almost necessary appendage. He spent days together at the house. He was fond of shooting, and his mornings were chiefly occupied

with the boys. He understood the general principles of agriculture, and passed an occasional hour with the father in viewing the management of his farm. He loved music, and was a proficient on more than one instrument. That ensured him the favour of the daughters; and he answered, without tiring, the questions relating to Spanish affairs which the mother unsparingly put to him. I need not say that he was a favourite with her. In short, in politics, acquirements, and manners, he was every thing that suited the particular tastes and united ideas of the whole circle. He was, notwithstanding all these external advantages, a libertine at heart. His ambition was unbounded. He longed for fame with the eagerness, and reckoned on it with the ardour, of youth. His self-confidence was unlimited, and he had no doubt of his powers to command good fortune. He wished for wealth as the means of acquiring distinction, and despised his expected patrimony, as well as the retirement in which it was situated. He had been for some time attached to the suite of King



Joseph at Madrid; had before then belonged to the body-guard of the emperor, and in that distinguished situation had been long stationed at Paris. He had imbibed all the vices, while perfecting himself in the refinements, of courts and capitals, and was, even there, a finished and notorious profligate.

In the circle of his native spot there was nothing of sufficient pomp to suit his inclinations; nothing highly-seasoned enough to excite his satiated taste; but still sufficient to satisfy his grosser appetite. In Le Vasseur's family he saw a native elegance, of a kind totally different from the artful embellishments of fashionable life, but something that resembled it more than he saw elsewhere; and he gazed on beauty of a description as exquisite as the most vitiated voluptuary could desire. He remarked with astonishment the grace with which these country girls danced; the feeling with which they played and sung; the ease and even eloquence with which they spoke, and their freedom from vulgarisms and provincial accent. This was all certainly astonishing,

inasmuch as it is uncommon ; but who has not, some time or other, met with such unaccountable and striking instances of inherent good taste and self-formed good breeding ?

The eldest of the daughters, whose name was Eugenie, attracted particularly St. Croix's regards, and seemed to value them the highest. She had all that brilliancy of beauty and showiness of person which the depravity of fashion prefers to more retiring charms. She was by far the best musician. She was of a gayer turn than Agnes ; and the attractions of the youngest two were not yet sufficiently developed to enter into the competition.

The flow of Eugenie's spirits had no bounds ; and her tongue kept pace with the rapidity of her thoughts. She talked incessantly, and generally well ; but she frequently got beyond her depth, and boldly entered into discussions on the most profound subjects with a levity which showed her disrespect as well as incapacity. Agnes thought on these matters pretty nearly as did her sister, but she talked less about them. She never scoffed at religion, and

felt there was 'a something holy in even its superstitions, and was sometimes almost disposed to regret that she could not enter into its enthusiasm. The mother delighted in Eugenie's talents and their display; but they caused the father many an anxious hour. He would have given worlds to have seen her well married; and he thought that such a man as St. Croix was exactly suited for her husband. With this view he encouraged the intimacy that was going on; and he felt that for Agnes he had no need of uneasiness. There was something in the reflective complacency of even her happiest moments which gave him surety for her. She had a heart fully as susceptible as her sister's, but more regulated; and although her feelings seemed to spring from the same source, they ran in quite a different channel. I cannot pursue the parallel further. The sequel of what I have to relate will illustrate their characters better than description.

For some months matters went on most smoothly with the family; continual parties of pleasure, in the rural scenes around, diversified



their domestic enjoyments. Frequent letters from the army gave assurance of the safety and good conduct of the young soldier. His place at home had been almost completely supplied by St. Croix. The father and mother were delighted by the prospect of having him really for their son, and the younger girls looked on him quite as a brother. The boys, too, considered him completely as such; and as for Eugenie, she gave herself up entirely to love. All that warmth of impassioned feeling which had so long been prisoned in her breast now rushed from its concealment with irresistible force. Every faculty of her mind seemed imbued with the spirit of enamoured inspiration; and she looked, and spoke, and sung more like some visionary being of the fancy than any thing real with which mortal sympathies have connexion.

St. Croix seemed equally ardent and impassioned, but his demeanour wanted that stamp of self-delight with which his lovely mistress seemed imprinted: towards her he was all that affection could create, but with himself he seemed

but ill at rest. His appearance wore a look of mingled agitation and enchantment, and at the times when he was the happiest he seemed the most unhappy. In fact, he was undergoing the severest struggle that the mind of a profligate, yet amorous, man could suffer: he was a constant prey to the contest of ambition with desire. He really loved Eugenie with all the force of the most violent passion, but he still panted after fame with the breathless ardour of devotion. To marry Eugenie would have forever thrown him back from the object of his primary pursuit: to lose her would have rendered him incapable of its enjoyment. The distinction which he looked to was only to be procured by means of a high alliance—a union with Eugenie would sink him at once into insignificance. He turned in every way his prospects and position: viewed, in all their bearings, the arguments for and against; but was long ere he forced himself to decide on the enjoyment of one ruling passion without the sacrifice of the other.

He was not without a portion of those better

feelings which I am fond of believing to belong more or less to all his countrymen; those genuine sentiments of natural good, which, even when they fall before the power of vice, cast a redeeming lustre on their possessors, and *too often* brighten the sombre shades of guilt. He hesitated long before he resolved on the seduction of Eugenie. I can scarcely, however, use that word: he had but little difficulty on her part to overcome. She was prepared for her fall by a long course of indifference to its criminality; and, if she had any qualms, they were more on the score of expediency than shame.

I do not mean to stain my pages by detailing the progress of this guilty passion, nor do I write to gratify licentious taste; neither have I to dwell, with the warmth of sensibility, on the aberrations of a delicate mind from the path of right. The mind of Eugenie knew nothing of true virtue; and I shall not attempt to excite a spurious compassion for an object undeserving of pity. She flung herself without hesitation into the open arms of her paramour, and in



his ardour had all that she required of consolation. He never talked of marriage, and she cared little on that point. She had no dread of the pangs which she was preparing for her mother, although loving her tenderly; nor of the shame she was bringing on her brothers; nor the danger into which she was thus guiding her sisters. She was quite convinced of her power to remove from all of them every feeling of temporary resentment; and she relied so strongly on the fidelity of St. Croix, that she was even ready to sacrifice them all, should they oppose themselves to a connexion which she felt was to endure for ever. But she sometimes shuddered at the anticipation of her father's severity. From this fear she, however, strove to shelter herself by the hope of being able to conceal her secret; and, if even discovered, she had volumes of reproach to heap upon him in return for the indulgence which led to her crime.

We may believe that in this state of feeling she had hours of much uneasiness. She had so, but they were fleeting. Her sorrow was not

founded on remorse ; and it is that alone which makes sorrow hopeless. She had no self-reproaches—for to herself she could justify what she had done by the arguments of many of her favourite authors, and the example of some of her friends.

But Le Vasseur could not coincide with those who maintained that females, whose example has once tended to loosen the bonds of society, should be allowed an opportunity of uniting them again, beyond the sphere of their own families, and the limited circle of their particular friends. In consistency with his opposition to the principle, he was obliged to discountenance its followers ; and if he failed in his efforts to instil strict notions of right into the minds of his children, he at least kept from them the practical instances of impurity. No female of suspected virtue was admitted to his house ; and if his daughters occasionally saw some of their tainted companions, it was by stealth.

While this narrowed the round of their social intercourse, it did not better themselves. The

system of outer toleration was too general to be affected by the rigid exclusion from one house, although one of most influence in the country; and the family of Le Vasseur, as well as his neighbours, unanimously pronounced him too strict. I have said little of the character of his wife, because little was to be said on the subject. She was a woman of great amiability, of placid temper, and engaging manners; who on all occasions submitted to others; who thought opposition produced only unhappiness; who indulged the foibles of her offspring, from fear of spoiling their tempers, and who concealed their faults from their father, in the dread of fretting him. Living, however, but for the well-being of her children and the will of her husband, she thought the first should be as dependent on the latter as she was herself; and if she wept, in the sequel, over her daughter's misfortune, it was more because it brought down her husband's anger than from any idea of its innate impropriety, or any notion that her own weakness could be imagined to have caused the calamity.



Such was the easy character of Madame Le Vasseur, and such were the two extremes through which her children had to steer: paternal austerity and motherly indulgence, totally incapable of association; and the one ever counteracting the good, and adding to the evil effects of the other. I feel that I am involuntarily urging arguments of extenuation for the immediate object of my censure. It is possible that I am; but as more morals than one are mixed together in my tale, I must only hope that there are the more chances for its example being effective.

Time, which in all cases flies, alas! too rapidly, is apparently accelerated in speed by every species of enjoyment, but by none so much as by that which is criminal.

When Eugenie looked back on four months from the commencement of her intercourse, she was amazed. It seemed incredible. The time was gone, and like a blank. No record was written of thoughts, feelings, or actions. All had been a wild and uncontrollable flow of spirit, which left no vestige of its course. She

remembered that she had been happy; and a wild and negligent air was visible in all she said or did.

St. Croix was ever with her, but did not partake of this abandonment. He was almost as impassioned as she was, but he was not so thorough a voluptuary. She thought but of him—he but of himself. Her infatuation must have led to inevitable discovery, had not the lover possessed a more limited share of susceptibility. His whole attention was turned to prevent the betrayal of their secret by the very object to whom discovery would have been most fatal.

Le Vasseur observed Eugenie's demeanour, and saw it with pleasure. He had made virtue too much his study to have had leisure for the contemplation of vice; and, if he had been called upon to draw an inference from his daughter's manners, he would have stated it to be the obviousness of her purity.

He often wondered at the agitated expression of St. Croix's countenance; but he saw him deeply enamoured of Eugenie, and believed that

no obstacle could interpose a barrier against their union. He knew the sentiments of St. Croix's father to be highly favourable to it, and he felt that he himself was not a man to be trifled with ; and that no alternative remained for him who had gone so far.

Madame Le Vasseur was a passive spectator of the progress of things. She saw that her husband was approving, and her daughter happy. The brothers regretted the attachment, which so engrossed St. Croix as to take him entirely away from a participation in their sports ; and the younger girls looked on in silence, and thought the lovers very extravagant. But Agnes had a deeper interest in the affair—for she was throughout her sister's confidant. How the mind silently sickens at this fact, and how naturally it turns from the instance of particular ill to the execration of the system in which it had its source ! What a mass of public turpitude must have vitiated the natural delicacy of the female breast before such a depository as a sister's bosom could be the chosen hiding-place of such a secret ! What



fumes of delusion, impiety, and vice must have risen from the authorized writings of the land before a bosom could be found to accept the trust!

Agnes was, however, her sister's confidant; and the trust could not have been reposed in a safer breast. Her every effort was exerted in devising plans for the prevention of discovery, and for persuading St. Croix into the necessity of his marrying Eugenie. She had the penetration to discover that he had no idea of such a step; and she saw enough of his character to convince her that no common motive would be sufficient to urge him to it. But she perceived through his libertinism a glimmering light of humanity and honour, and a ruling spirit of chivalrous feeling, which she hoped to bring into effective action against self-interest and ambition. She felt that with Eugenie it was premature to enter on a topic of such material texture. She saw in her romantic flightiness no basis on which such argument could rest; and she let her run on in the ungovernableness of her delusion, until the moment when neces-

sity should speak more forcibly than prudence or self-interest.

That moment had now arrived—for the infatuated Eugenie began to perceive that proofs of her intercourse would soon be furnished to the eye of every observer. Her first flash of feeling was that of rapture at the thought of becoming a mother; and her ecstasy burst upon St. Croix in the most impassioned strain of eloquent endearment. In offering him the promise of this pledge, her only fear was that excess of delight would be too much for his self-command. How blank and desolate was her heart when his involuntary exclamation of horror struck upon her ear! He was almost petrified, and lost all control. He poured out the bitterness of his angry regret in a flood of reproaches on his unfortunate associate; and he saw her sink insensible on the floor of the garden arbour, and rushed from it in the violence of his rage without a feeling for mother or for child.

Agnes met him in this mood; and he abruptly told her the secret which her sister had

revealed. She saw in his face the workings of his soul; but she did not for an instant lose her presence of mind, nor evince any appearance of surprise. In fact, she had for some time expected this communication, but was not astonished that the overflow of Eugenie's joy should have first betrayed itself to him who was so strictly joined with her in community of interest.

Agnes, with all her usual composure, and somewhat of her father's sternness, quietly replied to the passionate expression of St. Croix's emotion, "Then no time is to be lost: you must marry her without the least delay!" "Marry her!" exclaimed the criminal. "Madness! Never, never! She dreams not of such ruin." "Ruin! To whom?" "To me; to me eternal ruin. What! dash my hopes of everlasting fame to earth, and prostrate the golden glories of ambition at the feet of her who has led me to this connexion!—Never!" "St. Croix," replied Agnes, "I have no hopes of forcing you to your duty through any medium but your own heart: I shall not even combat the



momentary injustice which would fling upon my unhappy sister reproach or recrimination. If she *had* even been your tempter, you have bound your destiny to hers; and, were you even joined in fellowship with a fiend, the bonds would be eternal that were so cemented." She walked from him calmly towards the arbour. He spoke not a word, but remained fixedly gazing on her, with a sort of awful admiration, till he saw her enter the alley which led her to Eugenie; and, as he lost sight of her graceful figure, he felt as if lightened of a spell that chained him to the spot. He hurried away in a state of distracted feeling, but the last words of Agnes seemed still ringing in his ears.

He rushed from the garden by an unfrequented path, and was seen for above an hour pacing the neighbouring vineyard with agitated steps. An hour of deep reflection was nothing uncommon to him; but an hour of hard-contested struggle between ambition and honour was novel to his breast; for in general they acted in concert—at least, according to his notions. In this instance, however, he could

not blind himself to their opposition; for his feelings echoed back their violent and incessant clashing. In defence of the suggestions which bade him abandon Eugenie he had a host of ready arguments; the most leading of which was his never having promised her marriage. Then rushed up the doubt, if he ought not to have done so. Her promptness to meet his advances was at least the result of unbounded confidence; and he could not conceal from himself, that, had she made conditions, she might have had any that she chose. In short, his perturbation was extreme, and he suffered keenly during this hour of mental strife; but at every pause of thought, and often in the midst of thought's most violent paroxysms, the words of Agnes returned with all their air of supernatural and inspired delivery:—"Had you even joined in fellowship with a fiend, the bonds would be eternal that were so cemented." Whether it was the influence of this prophetic ejaculation, or the workings of natural good feeling, even St. Croix himself could never distinguish; but a magical and momentaneous

impulse seemed to strike him with the conviction, that a man involved in such a connexion as his was bound to abide the fate of his associate, though fortune, fame, or life was the inevitable sacrifice. His agitation ended in this fixed belief, and in a determination to act up to its principle: but, while we may suppose him in all the ferment of conflicting feelings, and before his determination was formed, we must turn awhile to her who suffered under the consequences of his intemperate treatment.



## CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Agnes entered the bower, she found the wretched Eugenie stretched senseless on the ground. Shocked as she was, she uttered no scream, nor did she lose in useless lamentation the moments which were so precious for the recovery of the sufferer. She flew to the little brook which flowed through the garden, and the readiness of reflection supplied her with a resource which the want of common conveniences would have rendered unattainable to a mind of less self-command. She steeped her handkerchief in the stream, and ran back with it to the bower. She applied the plentiful moisture to her sister's temples, and had soon the happiness to see her revive. I must not dwell on the distressing portrait which the poor victim presented; nor could I heighten by description the pain of every sensitive heart which imagines the picture of her wretched-

ness. The first expression of her recovered reason was a piercing shriek on perceiving her sister where her inhuman lover had so lately stood. The memory of all that had passed rushed in agony upon her brain; and, with long-redoubled cries, she called upon the father of her child. Agnes endeavoured to pacify her, but in vain. She would not be restrained; and the sounds of her anguished voice soon reached the house, and pierced even the recesses of her father's study.

The first persons of the family who reached the spot were her two brothers, who had been preparing for their morning sports, and, armed with their guns, they rushed towards the bower. Their wild inquiries were quickly answered by the frantic confessions of Eugenie. Her overloaded heart seemed relieved by every burst of agonised reproach, heaped as unsparingly upon herself as on the cause of her suffering. Agnes would have interposed between the rash avowal of Eugenie and the fiery agitation of the youthful listeners. Her most judicious efforts were, however, uselessly exerted; for the exclama-

tions of self-conviction were again and again repeated, and St. Croix as often accused of brutal villany. The brothers, thus wrought upon, gave loose to their mutual fury. With one glance of indignant sympathy flung upon their sister, they rushed through the shrubbery, and were lost to the imploring gaze of Agnes, who, still kneeling on the ground, supported in her arms the victim of violence and exhaustion.

The servants and labourers now came in, and next the mother. To each one was the fatal secret openly developed; but in the contemplation of him who followed them I pass over the effect produced on more common observers. Le Vasseur was the last who reached the harbour. The shrieks which had roused him from his retirement came more faintly repeated as he approached the spot; but the bewailing accents of his daughter forcibly caught his attention. The sounds of grief seldom proceeded from the voice of Eugenie. The penetrating mind of Le Vasseur quickly seized upon the truth. As he listened, the life-blood rushed



upwards from his heart, and a suffocating impression of agony and anger for an instant seemed to threaten life itself. His eyes swam, and had he not laid hold of a projecting tree, he felt that he must have fallen to the earth. It was some moments before he could recover himself sufficiently to move; and during this interval he heard enough, in the continued strain of self-accusation from within, to remove all shade of doubt, and to arouse the entire energies of the agonised father.

He entered the harbour. The paleness of united rage and sorrow overspread his face. He tottered feebly from the violence of his emotion, and large drops, rage-distilled, stood on his sternly-furrowed brow. The servants and labourers made way as he approached. His wife shrunk back, and Agnes sunk her head upon the bosom which she had been so long supporting. Eugenie alone seemed spell-bound by her father's withering gaze. Her eyes wildly glared upon him as he came slowly towards her, with uplifted hands clasped above his head. As he advanced he spoke not, but

fixed his looks upon her. His eyes for a moment closed, his brows were knit more rigidly, his lips compressed together with a sterner energy, his hands trembled on high; and then, as if this short but fearful preparation had given his mind full strength, he spoke: "Listen, daughter of infamy! listen to the curse of him who disowns you for his child. I curse you in the moment of your anguish, and I pray that it may last with your life. I drive you from my heart and my home, and implore the heavens, that eternal misery may light upon your desolate path!"

This was uttered in a voice of terrible energy; and when the listening group ventured again to look up, the father was seen hurrying from the bower, and the object of his malediction was once more senseless on the ground.

Agnes was the first to recover from the shock which the horrid fervour of her father had given to all. Her mother was flooded in her tears, but *she* could not weep. The springs of feeling seemed congealed within her breast, and an icy hardness pressing on her heart.

She felt at the moment that nothing in nature was half so terrible as a FATHER'S CURSE; and shuddered at the reflection that it was mere chance which had spared her, and drew it down upon her sister. But there was no time for the indulgence of thought: she saw that the life of Eugenie was at stake; and in resolute, but, she felt, in right defiance of her father's sentence, she ordered the people to bear her sister to the house. Madame Le Vasseur gave no sign of approval or disapprobation. The servants were always accustomed to regard the words of Agnes as law; and humanity joined at present in stimulating to the disobedience of an unnatural decree. They therefore carried the senseless sufferer along. As they passed towards the house, Le Vasseur was seen standing in a by path, with one hand clenched in involuntary agitation, and the other firmly placed upon his forehead, as if to control the angry spirit that seemed throbbing in his brain. He looked upon the melancholy procession unmoved, and saw it enter the house. The followers were all delighted at this tacit approval



on the part of the father ; but Agnes trembled anew as she gazed on the spectacle of his silent apathy.

Eugenie was borne to her own chamber, and placed before an open window. The repeated applications usual on such occasions brought her once more to herself. She had begun to revive, and was weeping bitterly, surrounded by her mother and sisters, when a new object of agitation and terror came to add to the calamities of this momentous day. A shot was heard from the vineyard. It came like the sound of fate to the ready anticipation of Eugenie. Agnes, too, felt an instinctive apprehension at a report so common, and at other times so harmless ; but her whole attention was turned to tranquillise her whose destiny, perhaps, hung upon the intelligence of the next moment.

While the sisters thus looked out in the violence of their emotion, a woful spectacle presented itself. The brothers were seen issuing from the vineyard, bearing between them the bleeding body of St. Croix. Eugenie started

from her seat, and in the frenzy of overwrought excitement she rushed from the house, followed by the scarcely less shocked spectators. She quickly met the object of her search; and before prevention could interfere, she flung herself upon her bleeding lover, accusing herself as the cause of his murder, and heaping execrations on the brothers, whose hands she intuitively concluded to have dealt the fatal blow. St. Croix was not, however, dead, but the life-blood was gushing fast away; and here again the presence of mind of Agnes was most strikingly displayed. She despatched messengers in two or three directions, in search of surgical aid; stanching the dreadful wound which had lacerated the breast of St. Croix, and had him quietly placed in the bed which he had so long occupied in the vigorous repose of health. He had fainted from pain and loss of blood, and was as insensible to the anguish of the one sister as to the wisdom of the other. Eugenie, the miserable Eugenie, could no longer support this terrible excitement. She saw her lover laid upon his bed—his eyes were

closed, she thought, for ever—and, sinking under the overwhelming pressure of her anguish, she was carried again to her chamber in the raging violence of a fever.

The causes which led to the immediate situation of St. Croix are quickly told. We left him pondering on the part which he was to pursue; but I had anticipated his decision of giving to Eugenie the only reparation for his injurious and unjust demeanour, by joining himself to her for ever. He was returning towards the garden, with his heart full of this resolve, and bursting with anxiety to utter it, when he was met and abruptly accosted by the brothers, who had sought him all round the farm. Their young breasts burned with swelling energy, and their brains were almost maddened by the sorrowful picture on which they had just gazed. The elder of the two approached St. Croix, and fiercely accosted him: “Are you a man? I know you to be a villain. Here! take this gun (presenting him that belonging to his brother). Place yourself on your guard—stand firm, for you have but a moment



to live.”—“ My dear Adolphe.”—“ What ! villain, does your *coward* heart fail you ?” That was enough. St. Croix was as impetuous as his young antagonist. The magic of one word had turned his blood to flame. He took the fowling-piece, and placed himself in the attitude to fire. Adolphe, at twenty paces from him, did the same. The younger brother was to give the signal ; but ere he could pronounce it, St. Croix’s better feelings once more prevailed, and the gun remained in his hands uncocked. The signal to fire was given, and Adolphe obeyed it too well. Almost the whole charge of small shot entered the breast of St. Croix, who was sensible to nothing farther, until roused by the painful operations of the surgeons, endeavouring to extract the shot.

The youthful instruments of his suffering were deeply affected. They felt that shrinking from themselves experienced by every humane man who has the misfortune to shed blood, even in an honest cause. They applied to their father for consolation, but he had none to give them : he had more need of it than they.

The daughter that he loved—the friend so highly valued—both in such imminent danger of death. His paternal tenderness abused—his confidence betrayed—his offended pride—his wounded honour—all that could be imagined of suffering to such a man, was accumulated in one dreadful storm, the suddenness of which was an aggravation of every individual horror. He stood, indeed, in want of consolation; and, most of all, of that consolation which he could not command. It was religion that he needed, to bear him up in this hour of trial. Philosophy and virtue were unavailing; and he exhibited a melancholy instance of strength of mind sinking under the more powerful sway of force of feeling. He had roused all his faculties to action when he pronounced the terrible curse upon his daughter; but such a display of desperation was not the natural man. It was the effort of that artificial character which he had for years been struggling to make his own. It was sufficient for the moment, but no more. While the anathema yet quivered on his lip, he saw a portion of its command in-

fringed, yet he saw this violation without power to control its progress ; and after reaching the farthest stretch of stoical exertion, he sunk down under all the weakness of humanity.

I cannot depict the state of his mind during the days which elapsed before St. Croix and Eugenie were declared out of danger. He passed this time in frequent and violent struggles as to the course he should pursue. His natural feelings told him to forgive his daughter, in compassion for her sufferings, while his assumed disposition urged him to persist in casting her off for ever. The contest ended as might be expected, when nature is the antagonist of art. The victory was on the side of clemency, and the good sense of Le Vasseur told him that he was right.

St. Croix had repeatedly, during his illness, sent assurances to Le Vasseur that his only hope for life was, that he might repair his injury to Eugenie, and make her happy. His own father was the negotiator between them, and the whole neighbourhood joined their solicitations for mercy to those so strongly urged



by the immediate members of the two suffering families. Le Vasseur was glad of so plausible an excuse, and he strove to make a dignified merit of yielding to their prayers what every body saw that his heart was yearning to grant.

His first interview with St. Croix was very interesting, but that with his daughter was affecting in the extreme. During the delirium of her fever, she had repeatedly fancied that she saw her father, and in her frequent ravings had called on his name. She sometimes implored, and sometimes defied him. Heaped on him, at one moment, the most endearing appellations; at another, loaded him with epithets of fearful execration. These heart-rending wanderings sunk deep into the mind of Agnes, and she fervently hoped, again and again, that she might die before such a state as that should be her lot.

At length the crisis of Eugenie's fever passed by, and, whether from the natural force of her constitution, or the more probable cause that she had not been worn down by the over-done severity of medical aid, she seemed to have lost

but little of her former strength, and a few days made a rapid change for the better in her appearance. Still, though she had not the haggard and emaciated look which a fever patient in England carries for weeks after his recovery, she was but the shadow of her former loveliness. She looked pale and exhausted, and her mind seemed to be yet more worn down than her body. She believed her lover to be dead, and the physicians thought it dangerous for awhile to undeceive her. With her recovered reason she caught the recollection of St. Croix, and the melancholy hope of joining him in the grave where she believed him buried. She refused, under different pretences, the nourishment necessary for life itself, and under those circumstances it became absolutely requisite, even at the risk of a relapse, to inform her of the only truth that could induce her to live.

For the performance of this task her father was considered the best qualified ; and he consented to see her for the purpose of assuring her of his forgiveness, and of communicating

the intelligence which was to give his pardon the most effectual value. Eugenie ardently expected this first interview; for, feeling that she could not live, she was miserable at leaving the world without her father's blessing pronounced from his own lips. Her mother and Agnes had repeatedly told her of his forgiveness, but she was not satisfied with this. She prayed that she might be allowed to see him, and was so much agitated by the delays insisted on by the physicians, that they at length considered the emotions to be looked for from the meeting were less to be apprehended than the effects of her protracted anxiety.

The hour being at length fixed for the interesting visit, the father announced his readiness to proceed to her chamber, and the time approached. She received the announcement with composed delight, and seemed calmly prepared for the arduous scene; but in a little she betrayed symptoms of uneasy apprehension and occasional wanderings of thought and expression. A feverish flushing stole over her pallid cheeks, and she was seen occasionally to turn



her eyes towards the door with a wildness of gaze that was thought symptomatic of a relapse. At length her state of nervous irritability became so oppressive, that she begged that her father might not see her that day. Her mother was commissioned to be the bearer of this wish; but, ere she had left the chamber a minute, Agnes was despatched by the capricious sufferer to recal the postponement, and request his presence. He accordingly, in no slight emotion, prepared to attend the summons, but had not reached her chamber door, accompanied by his wife and Agnes, when one of the younger sisters once more forbade his entrance. As they entered the chamber he retired, and had but just again composed himself to his study, when a renewed entreaty from the agitated invalid was borne by the remaining sister, cancelling the last prohibition, and soliciting his immediate presence.

Le Vasseur was almost overpowered by these proofs of the misery of his unhappy child. If one lurking feeling of resentment still lingered in his bosom, it was utterly erased by the force

of her affliction, and in moving once more, in tacit obedience to her call, he almost felt himself unequal to the trying scene. He, however, summoned up all his fortitude, and reached her chamber-door. He here paused, and half hoped that some renewal of Eugenie's apprehensions might come to prevent the exposure of his own. He shook the handle of the door with noise sufficient to announce his approach, but no voice pronounced the wished-for opposition to his entrance. He next coughed aloud, knowing that by that he should be recognized. All was, however, still. He then desired his daughter, who accompanied him, to go softly in, and see if Eugenie did not sleep, and, as she entered, he leant forward, in the hope of catching the heavy breathing which heralds the momentary repose of illness. But his wife appeared and beckoned him in. He had no alternative; he could not shrink back, and he made a final effort to recover his firmness. His wonted severity of aspect and utterance was now forgotten, and, in this moment of trial, the

man completely triumphed over the philosopher.

Eugenie heard him enter, but she saw him not. She did not venture to look up. A film seemed spread before her eyes. She trembled in every limb. Her heart leaped with violence, and fancy pictured her father with the countenance, and in the attitude, in which she had last gazed on him. The appalling recollection rushed upon her mind, and vibrated in terror through her feeble frame. She buried her head beneath the bed-covering, and exclaimed aloud, that she could not, dared not, look upon him. He in a tremulous and tender voice pronounced her name. "Eugenie, my child!" were the only words that he could utter; but the tone in which he spoke them was like magic to the daughter's feelings—so plaintive, so expressive, so unlike his usual firm enunciation—she felt lightened of a load of fear; and, with an electric impulse of delight, she started up and saw her father. Could it be him? she involuntarily asked herself—sunk on one knee



beside the bed—his brow unbent—his lips quivering—his voice choked with sobs, and his eyes streaming with tears! She uttered a cry of mingled rapture and amazement, and flung herself into the arms which opened wide to fold her to a parent's heart.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CHAPTER V.

Two years from this day saw France relieved from war, and the family of Le Vasseur once more at peace and happy. Eugenie, the married mother of two beautiful children, living in her own home; her eldest brother returned from Spain, covered with honourable wounds and well earned fame; the two younger boys grown up to gallant youths; the younger sisters lovely and accomplished; and Agnes possessed of the only want of her heart—a lover.

The nuptials of Eugenie and St. Croix, which immediately followed his convalescence, were a festival of general joy to all within the circle of the family acquaintance. There was something so interesting, so romantic, so *sentimental*, in the adventure, that the most powerful sympathy was excited in behalf of the united lovers.

The wedding festivities were gay and graceful. Music ushered in the morning, and dancing

closed the day. Crowds of admiring friends attended the young couple to the Mairie\* and the church; for the ceremonies of religion added their sanction to the civil contract required by the law. Many a flower was ravished from its stem to strew the path of the bridal party; and the quickly fading bloom of the bouquets seemed an appropriate warning to the chief personage of the procession. She, the thoughtless Eugenie, moved on, blithe and blushing, not from modesty but joy. Her look resembled not the fluctuations of a bridal countenance which I once gazed on. There the mingled emotions of virgin agitation at one moment flushed the cheek with crimson, the next called back the burning tide to swell the maiden's heart, and leave her visage colourless;—bringing to my remembrance the varying beauties which I had seen in the passes of a mountain chain, when some graceful peak, clothed in heaven's whitest snow, blushed for an instant in the roseate light of a refracted sun-

\* The town-house.



beam, and then, as the slant ray verged down the hill, relapsed into its hue of mild yet dazzling purity.

But the triumphant glance of Eugenie spoke only a consciousness of her victory over ill-fortune. Snatched from the threshold of the grave, she gained no salutary advantage from her escape, but turned back upon the world with redoubled relish for its most worthless vanities. She thought not of the past, nor looked forward to what was to come; but clung to the present enjoyment, as buoyant as the light-winged hours which were fleeting so fast and sunny over her span of life. St. Croix supported her on his arm, and his pallid brow showed the occasional furrow traced by some flitting recollection. He behaved however well, and wore a firm if not an enraptured demeanour. Every member of the Le Vasseur family attended. The affectionate mother wept floods of joyous tears. The sisters indulged freely in her happiness. The sons showed a frank and manly satisfaction, and Le Vasseur himself bore

up in unison with the general appearance of content.

St. Croix and his wife removed immediately to the house of his father, whose widowed solitude was cheered by such a happy accession to his domestic enjoyments. His comfort was however of short duration; for the perturbation of mind which had so violently acted upon a feeble constitution, during the late trying circumstances, brought him to the grave in less than a year after the marriage of his son. St. Croix became thus master of his property, and having neither brother nor sister, he was very well in the world; and, with the peculiar facility of a French philosopher, he flung off every notion of his former views, renounced his shadowy hopes of fame, and, settling down into the farmer of his own ground, gave himself up to those rural occupations for which his neighbourhood was so well adapted.

Eugenie, in her new capacity of mistress of a family, had an ample field for the display of her natural character. The warmth of her

heart had now free channels into which it could run; and her wilder feelings being bounded by a settled object, she was in less danger of suffering from their excess. Her old acquaintances flocked round her with undiminished fondness, and no notion of disrespect attached itself to the memory of her misconduct.

Eugenie, however, in the midst of her apparent enjoyments, had one subject of severe regret, sufficient to chill the warmest of her pleasures; and in the bloom of all her joys there was a canker at her heart. Although not at all sunk in her own esteem, or her husband's, or her mother's, or her friends', she saw clearly that she had for ever lost her father's. She felt bitterly his evidently uncontrollable dislike. He appeared to shun her society even at his own house; and she naturally felt a disinclination to meet him at hers. In short, there was but little intercourse between them; but the younger branches of the family often saw each other.

Le Vasseur, having lost in a great measure his fondness for his eldest daughter, seemed to turn with a tenfold affection to Agnes. She



had always been his favourite child, and resembled him more than any of the others in all the better parts of his character. She was drawn still closer to him by his feeling towards her sister, for she pitied him, knowing that he felt himself disgraced as well as afflicted; and though differing widely with him on the main point of Eugenie's guilt, she took care not to shock him by any avowal of her opinion on a subject upon which his was so decided. While lavishing every kindness that he had the means of bestowing to meet each want and wish of Agnes, decorating his house anew according to her taste, and forgetting the austerity of his character in the overflowing of his indulgence, Le Vasseur still neglected no opportunity of recurring with the whole weight of his reasoning to the subject which gave rise to his present conduct. He was evidently dissatisfied with the part he had acted on that occasion. He saw that he had lost the finest opportunity of his life for leaving behind him the character of that unbending and implacable virtue, to establish which his whole life had been devoted.

He felt himself little in comparison to what he had been; degraded in the eyes of those who had looked upon him as a paragon of republican firmness; and he was conscious that he had descended from the pedestal of his pride to mingle in the common ranks of every-day men.

The mortification which this caused him was much more powerful than any counterbalancing pleasure founded on the applause which he had obtained. He had seen so much evil produced in the world by the plastic characters of those who are thought the best, that he would have rather been an object of fear than of affection; and, unsatisfied at the late example of his weakness, he almost wished, at times, for an opportunity of redeeming his character by giving a proof of his severity.

But these last were flitting and unsettled thoughts: in his better moments he had none of them. They were the wayward errings of his artificial mind: his natural feelings revolted from them; and he was even sometimes, in the fulness of his heart, disposed to think that he

had rather relieved his reputation from the stain of harshness than loaded it with the stigma of unsteadiness. "If, however," he used to exclaim, "if another instance should occur!—" But he never could finish the sentence, nor allow his thoughts to dwell on the anticipation.

If Le Vasseur wished to have procured a husband for Eugenie before the unfortunate connexion that ended in her marriage, much more ardently did he now hope to be able to fix on suitable matches for his remaining daughters. But still, with that frightful example before his eyes, he knew not how to accomplish his desire. He had ever been averse to matches of mere interest, or those formed in the usual heartless and business-like manner which is customary in France, where love is, generally speaking, a matter as foreign to marriage as friendship in a mercantile transaction with us; where the fortune of the man is thrown into one scale, and that of his intended bride into the other; when, if she is "found wanting," her family, her connexions, and her



interest, are flung in to make up the balance; but where beauty, accomplishment, or virtue, have scarcely weight enough to turn the beam.

My story is a proof that there are exceptions to this general habit, and Le Vasseur had full in view the danger of encouraging a union founded on mutual attachment. The risks of such a connexion appalled him, and he shuddered when he saw an agreeable young man pay a visit at his house. The violence, or at least the sternness of his political principles, was a great bar to the attainment of his heart's first object. Interests became so divided, and animosities so strong, party spirit ran so high, and party hatred so deep, that the ruin of society was the consequence.

The overthrow of the imperial dynasty, and the re-establishment of the Bourbons, produced a convulsion of opinions which is known to all the world; but few, who have not seen the distant effects proceeding from these grand transactions, can form a just idea of the evils which hang upon the movements of the great. It is not in the crowded capital that such conse-

quences can be estimated. There every circle of society plays round an axis of its own, but does not interrupt the evolutions of the others, forming with it a general system. There things go on as if no change had been. The theatres, the public walks, and the churches, are as crowded as ever, and men gaze on their fellows without frown or sneer, because they cannot from the million single out each particular opinion. A few only are marked by their avowal. One cannot stop another in the street, and ask for the confession of his faith; and the mixture of so many varying shades blends insensibly into a mass of general colouring, while the perpetual contact of opposite feelings rubs off the asperities from their surface. It is that which gives the true polish to city manners in the worst commotions; but in the remote seclusion of the country all is different. There men move in the open daylight of public cognizance. There are no hiding-places wherein they may skulk, nor crowds to give them shelter. Every individual of the thin-scattered population is a mark for the observation of the others; and each one

carries the stamp of his opinions upon him, as plain as if he bore the label of his party round his neck.

In scenes so confined, men are, in quiet times, joined together for their common comfort; but when the moment comes in which their interests clash, the ties which bound them are snapt asunder with a sharpness proportioned to their former tension. They fly off from each other like opposing metals in a crucible, and every figure stands out upon the scene in all the naked individuality of relief. They then herd together—but there is no grace in their combinations; and society looks like a piece of patchwork, where different colours every where glare out in independent solitude.

It is thus that every distinct *set* lends its aid to the general deformity, and the great charm of every thing living or inanimate, variety, is lost. Every house becomes a nest for the nourishment of prejudice, while every disjointed member of the common family hangs loose and incapable of performing its functions; and, instead of aiding in the general harmony of



nature, looks like a breaking out upon its fair and beauteous face.

Le Vasseur was one of those who lent their unintended aid to this demoralizing system. His idol was consistency; and in straining after it, he too often stretched a good feeling to excess. He was a rigid republican; and during the short interval of one hundred days, when the return of Buonaparte brought about events which changed the destiny of the world, Le Vasseur thought he saw a bright occasion for the re-establishment of that form of government which had his whole devotion. He boldly promulgated his views, and hoped to make himself a rallying point for all who thought with him. Many did come forward; and, had sufficient time been given for ripening their designs, the mischief might have spread. But the fate of Europe could not wait for the tardy developement of these Utopian schemes, and Louis was once more fixed upon the throne which, it was discovered, had no chance of security unless it was erected on a constitutional basis.

Le Vasseur again sunk down into domestic quiet; but he excluded from his house all who, by deed or word, gave support to the reigning family. St. Croix was not so rigid: his military life had thrown him amongst men of all opinions and principles; and amongst those too, of no opinions and no principles. He was not a little infected by the general laxity of his associates; and, while he talked of liberality in the formation of his friendships, it was, in fact, licentiousness which he had in his mind. He mixed a good deal with his neighbours of politics different from those which he professed—which were those of his family and connexions; and Agnes and her sisters met at his house many persons who were never admitted to the sanctuary of their home.

Foremost among these visitors, in every thing which Agnes considered amiable and attractive, was the young de Monigny, the son of an emigrant who had returned from England with the king; and who, having lost beyond redemption the entire of his large possessions, had been appointed to an official situation, of slight emolu-

ment, in the town close by St Croix's residence. The son, who, like most young men of that station, was very poor, and very idle, soon became a favourite with St. Croix, and was often invited to his house. But he had better claims upon the admiration and regard of Agnes. A good person and expressive countenance were his most trivial advantages. The gravity of his deportment assorted well with her own; and the reflective, yet cheerful turn of his conversation, seemed the result of good sense engrafted on good nature, and formed a fine contrast with the flashy and flimsy manners of St. Croix. De Monigny had been brought up in England from his childhood. He spoke the language like a native; had studied the literature, the institutions, and the habits of the people, and had turned his observations to account. With all that noble warmth of national feeling, of which no Frenchman can divest himself, he possessed an open eye to the manifold faults of his countrymen;—but he was also sensible of their many merits, as well as of the errors of the nation he had so recently quitted. His study had long



been to form for himself a character composed of the better qualities of both nations ; and being one of the happy few whose feelings are subservient to their reason,—whose hearts submit to the dictates of their heads—he completely succeeded in his design. Thus, at thirty years of age (when Agnes first saw him), he was one of those rare and inestimable models of manners, conduct, and character, which it would be well if the awkward English youth, and the blustering young Frenchman, more frequently studied.

Agnes had just passed her twentieth year, a period when a female in the south of France acquires her full maturity of manners as well as mien. If the women there want the brilliant bloom which girls of that age wear in England, and that exquisite air of innocence which is nowhere to be rivalled, they have other charms peculiar and almost equivalent.—An eye of fire, often tempered by reflection; a lip of ripe luxuriance; ringlets of polished jet, and teeth of pearl: while, under the autumnal tint of their transparent skin, the young blood circles on,

giving a hue of mellow richness to the cheek, less bright but more subdued. Then the ever-beaming expression of their glance—their intelligence—their softened air, that happy medium between languor and indifference—their light and graceful figures!—Agnes united all within herself. No wonder, then, if between her and de Monigny a sympathy of tastes was followed by a mutual passion.

The lover, however, was no boy, nor his mistress a child. They saw their mutual danger. He was pennyless, for the scanty allowance granted him by his father was revocable at will; and he knew that his consent to such a match was out of the question. Agnes, on her part, remembered Eugenie. She felt also the indulgent kindness of her father; she knew that his happiness depended much on her, and she dreaded the impossibility of obtaining his sanction to her attachment. Such were the startling obstacles which lay in the way of Agnes and de Monigny, but they considered them too late—for they loved already; and a passion so forcible and so well founded would have defied

the warnings of a philosophy stronger even than theirs.

Eugenie soon perceived the nature of her sister's feelings, and she half rejoiced in the danger to which she fancied her exposed. Seeing no sort of criminality in the indulgence she had herself practised, she rather took pains to facilitate her sister's following her track, than made efforts to turn her from it; and unconscious of the real cause of her own feelings, which arose from that mingled selfishness and envy, the first consequence of guilt, she wished that Agnes might fall into the snare, confident that she would then, as well as herself, become the object of her father's estrangement, or, perhaps, by striking a new blow at his pride, weaken the strength of his particular resentment. She therefore carefully fanned the rising flame, and her impatience made her often question Agnes as to its progress.

Agnes, however, made no confident to her attachment. She continued for some months to receive the professions of her lover, and she confessed to him alone the strength of her



affection. They would have wilfully placed a bandage before their eyes, but they could not blind themselves to the utter hopelessness of their passion. They were neither of them, however, of that reckless and indolent turn, which makes lovers sometimes sink under the weight of their despair, and seems to impart a charm to its worst excesses. Agnes calculated a little on her father's unbounded affection. De Monigny knew that he possessed the esteem, as well as regard of his parent; and they agreed, by mutual plan, to endeavour to procure some relaxation of their relative severity. Agnes knew full well the impossibility of shaking Le Vasseur's political dislikes; but she had a faint hope that, by well arranged efforts, she might weaken one (it was all she asked) of his personal prejudices.

On every fair occasion she brought before him the particular merits of her lover, but that in a manner so guarded, as at first not to rouse his suspicions. The frequent recurrence to the same topic, and the animation with which the self-deceived Agnes discussed the character of

one whom she affected to speak of with indifference, could not, however, escape her father's penetration; and in one of those conversations, brought about by Agnes, an unguarded warmth, in one of her eulogiums, told him clearly that her heart was irretrievably engaged. He considered de Monigny (although he had never seen him) as an enemy, in common with all his party. No sooner did the conviction of his daughter's attachment to an object so detested flash across his mind, than he felt himself the most desolate of mankind.

He burst into no paroxysm of rage, nor did one word of reproach fall from his lips. He looked as though the whole weight of destiny had fallen to crush him, and seemed bowed down by the magnitude of his misery.

Agnes saw the emotion which agitated her father, and it cut her to the soul. She addressed him in the most affectionate and soothing accents—assured him that the gratitude and affection which she owed him were nothing impaired—that her heart by being divided by two objects, with claims equally irresistible,

but totally distinct, would acquire strength in its movements, and stability in its devotion. She fixed her streaming eyes full upon his, and entreated him to reply; but he answered not a word. Resentment appeared dead to every possibility of utterance, but his looks were daggers.

Agnes was racked with the most agitated sensations. It was the first time that she had ever caused her father a painful moment, and she felt that her offence was wilful. But, with all the aggravation which this consciousness brought to her distress, the idea of abandoning her lover never entered her mind. She flung herself on her knees, and took her father's hands in hers. She wildly strained them to her heart, but they returned no pressure. She put them to her lips, and the tears which fell on them in showers spoke much more forcibly than words; but all seemed lost on the immoveable sorrow of Le Vasseur. She implored his pardon—his pity: appealed to every thing generous in his nature; to every liberal sentiment; to every fatherly feeling. A cold atten-



tion to her words was, for a considerable time, all she could obtain. At length, as if life seemed to awaken again within him, he recovered his wonted animation. His eyes fixed themselves upon her, but not with their accustomed tenderness. A glazed fixedness usurped the place of their usual expression, and a sternly sorrowful composure sat upon his brow. He spoke, and the agitated listener hung upon his words with the air of one who waited for the sentence of life or death. He addressed her with solemnity; briefly, but forcibly, pointed out the probable consequences of the attachment she had formed; its evils, and, as he thought, its error. All this was pronounced with a determined coolness that she saw was the forerunner of some terrible decision. It was so in fact, for he swore that he never would consent to the union she desired; and that if she persisted in her determination to complete it, it was at her peril; for on its entire abandonment depended his ever again acknowledging her for his child.

He left her with a calm and measured austerity. Agnes remained for some time buried

in thought ; but she gradually recovered her accustomed serenity, and when she met her father at the dinner-table, showed no change in look or demeanour. He, on the contrary, was silent and sorrowful ; a dark and desperate struggle seemed to work in his breast, but far too deep to be betrayed by any common expression of pain. Agnes seemed to have recovered the shock, and to have already decided on her future steps. She had got over the fear of her father's determination, while he in his turn now dreaded that resolution which she possessed in common with himself, but in a more forcible degree, from hers being natural, and his assumed. She hoped in vain to continue her self-command, and he fruitlessly endeavoured to assume her tone ; but an involuntary restraint was the consequent effect of their separate sensations, and it was as firmly established as if it had been fixed by mutual consent. He did not, therefore, object, a few days afterwards, to a proposal of his wife, that Agnes should go to pass some time at the house of Eugenie. Le Vasseur had great

reliance on the wisdom of Agnes, and he thought that by leaving her to its unrestricted sway, he was doing more toward the attainment of his object, than by offering in restraint incentives to disobedience.



## CHAPTER VI.

ON her arrival at St. Croix's she was met by the impatient de Monigny. He too had seen his father, and had as ineffectually endeavoured to subdue his inveterate opposition. The only point the indignant father would concede was a confirmation of the trifling pension which he had hitherto allowed him; and on this inadequate sum the ardent lover resolved at all hazards to attempt his own and his mistress's support. The communication of their mutual failure, and their mutual grief, seemed to bind more closely their united hearts, for nature nor art holds no cement like sympathy of woe.

St. Croix and Eugenie, who were now in the confidence and counsel of the lovers, were present at this interview. They had never seen him so unmanned nor her so overcome. They essayed their kindest efforts to console them,

but finding all fruitless, they left them to themselves.

From this day Agnes visibly pined away. The glow of mind which formerly shone in her face seemed overcast by a hopeless and immoveable affliction. Her eye was dull and her cheek without bloom. No smile of pleasing thought played round her parched and colourless lip. Her hair hung disordered over her brow, and her hands fell listless by her side. Her ear was open to all sounds; but those of joy awoke no echo in her brain, which seemed to reverberate only to tones of grief and lamentation; while the burning thought within consumed her beauty and her happiness.

Her father saw her wasting away, and he himself appeared to decline as fast as she did. The secret of her attachment became known to all the family, and while all participated in the despondency of the father and daughter, they nevertheless made many hopeless and forlorn attempts to remove it. The manly remonstrances of the eldest son, the entreaties of St. Croix and Eugenie, the silent tears of the

mother, the smiling endearment of the younger children, were all tried in vain upon Le Vasseur. He had throned himself upon a rock of resolution from which nothing could remove him; but with the self-confident blindness, which ever waits on obstinacy, he could see no danger in it. He trusted to his vigorous resistance gaining the victory in the end; and as his solicitors, in the behalf of Agnes, dropped off one by one from their energetic efforts, he only waited for the hour when she herself should pay the tribute to his determination, by yielding up her lover for her father's sake.

On this principle he did not even oppose her seeing de Monigny, for not doubting the result, he hoped his triumph would be the greater. This feeling did not proceed from any selfish or unworthy vanity; but he looked forward to the good effects of the example on his other children, and knew that it would be striking in proportion to its strength. Agnes, therefore, was frequently at St. Croix's, and saw de Monigny often and unrestrained. His passion seemed to grow with every hour, and his



urgency for their marriage with every obstacle. Her attachment was tenderly but placidly evident; and her friends, affected by her worn and wasted appearance, urged her, upon the time of her reaching the age which authorized her by law, to join herself to her lover in defiance of an unjust and positive parent. De Monigny was not backward in arguments to persuade her to this step; and Agnes herself *knew* that it must be the final alternative.

But as the day of her legal emancipation from parental authority arrived, she determined to make one effort more to melt the obduracy of Le Vasseur. At the very hour on which she completed her twenty-first year, she broke in unexpectedly on the retirement of his study, and flung herself upon his neck. He understood and *felt* the appeal, and for a moment his arms instinctively closed around her. "Oh, my father! my dear father!" cried Agnes, "drive me not to utter despair. You know not what you are doing by your rigid resolution. Give me your consent to be happy and respectable. You must, you must!" Her sobbing

rendered further speech impossible, but her choked and convulsive efforts to articulate told that she had a world of arguments to urge. She would have gone on, but her father, gently disengaging himself, desired her, in a tone scarcely audible, to leave him. She would not, however, be repulsed. She clung to him as he strove to escape from her embrace. Her tears rolled upon his cheeks, and she even thought his own were mingled with them. But even if they were, they had not power to wash away his firm resolution. He gathered all the firmness of his voice, and repeated his determination to see her die, and to die himself, sooner than give the required consent; and he was at last obliged forcibly to put her from him, and to escape from the struggle which he doubted his power to prolong.

That interview of misery was the last in which she ever saw her father. As soon as she could recover her presence of mind, and sufficient bodily strength, she arose and left the apartment. Without delay, or consultation with any of the family, she hurried from the

house, and in the unfixed wildness of despair she traversed the road which led to the residence of her sister. Arrived there, she communicated the result of her attempt to de Monigny, St. Croix, and Eugenie. Her resolution was now unequivocal; and an immediate application, as prescribed by the laws, was made on her part to her father, demanding his consent to her intended marriage. A prompt refusal was the consequence. Another and another demand, followed by negatives, as steady and inflexible, left nothing which public rule considered as obstacles; and the necessary previous ceremonials being gone through, de Monigny led his affianced bride to the presence of the public officer, before whom the inviolable contract was required to be solemnized. They were attended by St. Croix and Eugenie—no more. How different to the glad procession which usually accompanies a wedded couple! How unlike the expensive and joyous celebration of Eugenie's own nuptials! Instead of the gaudy crowd, showering flowers and blessings on the youthful pair, there was no one to be



seen but some gazing stragglers, attracted to the spot by uninterested and listless curiosity. The friends of both families kept far away, or if a passing few encountered by chance the progress of the bridal party, they hurried from the path with averted eyes, as if there were contagion in its train. A beggar or two gave their common-place and sordid benediction,—and thus escorted they entered the public office. The mayor, who was an intimate friend of de Monigny's father, went through the duty which his situation imposed on him with a cold and sullen reserve. The greffier, who registered the contract, had his part in the gloomy combination, and seemed anxious to engraft on his ill-favoured visage a scion from the stem of his superior's disdain; while the ragged clerk, who affixed the seal of office, strove to redouble the reflections of authority in his gruff and greasy countenance, and stamped the arms of the town with an energy so startling, as to tell that an unmuttered imprecation lent its impulse to the act.

Every thing was blank and joyless. The

looks of de Monigny depicted none of the fervid earnestness of expectant love, and Agnes was the living illustration of misery. St. Croix and Eugenie felt the infection, and no congratulatory embrace echoed round the wide and silent chamber. The party walked away ; nor did the hallowed solemnities of religion follow the celebration of the civil ceremony, which was all that the law required. They were one, —it was enough. They returned to the house of St. Croix, and the morrow ushered in no sounds of merriment, nor shone upon a face of new-born rapture.

Declining the longer participation of St. Croix's residence, the new-married couple removed the following day to a little cottage on his grounds, hastily fitted up for their reception. Cheerless and sad, it contained nothing by which the residence of the newly-married may be almost invariably recognized. If elegance be wanting, or even the necessary comforts of life, there is at least, with scarcely an exception, in the homeliest hut where wedded love first settles, a glow of genial kind ; a breathing

of indifference to worldly cares; a heaven of blithe enjoyment which defies both poverty and ill-fate. But if one exception ever did exist to this generally blessed lot, it was now, in the hopeless home of Agnes and her husband.

It was summer; and the unsheltered cot received the angry beams of the sun without any respite or relief: the hard earthen floor, the rough and unpainted walls, the scanty furniture, one ignorant, uncivilized attendant, all threw an air of utter wretchedness around, and "MISERY" seemed written on the walls. Some of the kind-hearted neighbours, by presents, added to the bountiful supplies of St. Croix and Eugenie, would have rendered this hopeless situation more tolerable; but they were all rejected with a pride that seemed to spring from bitterness of soul. Even the friendly visits of the few who still would cling to the unfortunate were declined; and none admitted, with the sole exception of the physician, the old and tried friend of the family. The presence of even Eugenie and St. Croix appeared at first unwelcome, and was in a little time



wholly refused; while the frequent efforts of Madame Le Vasseur and her other children to see the unhappy Agnes were all in vain.

The mystery hanging over this resolute and unmitigated seclusion at length determined the anxious mother to gain an entrance by stratagem; and accordingly one night, when darkness and rain left her approach less than ever suspected, she hastened towards the cottage of de Monigny attended by St. Croix. Eugenie, being in expectation of soon becoming again a mother, could not venture to join the party.

Just four months had now elapsed from the day of Agnes' marriage; and her mother had for some weeks abandoned her oft-repeated solicitations for admission. Her agitation on approaching the bleak and lonely habitation became extreme. She thought of her own home comforts, and the comparative elegancies which surrounded Eugenie. She asked herself which of the sisters was most worthy; and the bitterness of self-answering recollections quite overpowered her. She wept aloud, and was led on unresisting, by the guidance of St. Croix, en-

deavouring to stifle the audible expression of her distress. As they came close to the house, the low murmuring of voices from within made them pause for a moment, and they saw, through the half-opened shutters of the little parlour window, the hapless owners of this mansion of misery. They were seated at a coarse and rustic table: a solitary lamp, placed upon the chimney, threw its melancholy beam upon the wan and hollow countenances of Agnes and de Monigny. The former was busily employed at needle-work, and her husband, with looks of compassionate meaning, seemed striving to give her comfort.

Madame Le Vasseur could gaze no longer. She raised the latch of the door,—for no precautions close the houses of these remote and secluded parts: but if robbers did infest the country, there was little temptation for their attacks in the scanty possessions of de Monigny. The sudden opening of the door made him now start from his chair, and when he recognized the intruders, a flush of anger rose upon his pallid cheek; but he suppressed his emotion and

turned to Agnes, who, in the first movement of surprise, and unguarded affection, advanced to embrace her mother. But Madame Le Vasseur for a moment shrunk back. A thousand-conflicting sensations rushed at once across her mind, for as her eye caught the self-betraying form of Agnes, she saw with a glance that she was in the most advanced state of pregnancy. The recollection of her situation came like lightning to the memory of Agnes. She made an effort to fold her robe around her; and as the first astonished pang of Madame Le Vasseur subsided, and as she was hurrying forward to meet the proffered embrace of her daughter, the returning consciousness of the latter made her sink with empty arms into her chair.

The remainder of the interview may be better imagined than described. The astonished St. Croix hastened back to convey the unexpected news to Eugenie; while Madame Le Vasseur spent the remainder of the night in assurances of forgiveness, and many a common-place, though heartfelt condolence, quite lost on the despairing listener.



The dawning of a heavy morning brought no gleam of hope to the afflicted group, but it showed more plainly to the mother the ravages which a little time had made in her once beautiful and blooming child. Her anguish was almost insupportable; and she saw that she but added to the distress of Agnes, who seemed overpowered and bent down under the conviction that her *father's curse* awaited his discovery of her situation. With this feeling she implored her mother to keep the secret from him, and to give her a chance of dying unbetrayed. She uttered no reproach against him, nor did she shelter her offence with the plea which his obstinate opposition might have given her, even when confessing to her mother, that the day of his resolute unkindness, on discovering her attachment, was that in which the despair of Monigny and herself led to the fatal forgetfulness of his duty, and the fall of her honour. But she now looked upon the past without pain, and mechanically made preparations for the future; while her whole powers of thought and feeling were concentrated in the

dread of that malediction, which once riveted her to the earth, although launched against another.

Her mother, to quiet her fears, told her that she would be discreet; and, assuring her that her secret should be safe from her father, she left her somewhat more composed. On the return of Madame Le Vasseur to St. Croix's, however, she, in concert with them, agreed to make every thing known to her husband. They unanimously agreed, that much was to be expected from his natural tenderness upon his hearing the truth of Agnes's suffering, and from the strong affection towards her, which was best evinced by his wretchedness ever since the fatal hour in which he drove her from his bosom. Full of the most benevolent hopes, they hastened to his house; and without formal or settled plan, the intelligence burst from them, in an united disclosure, which none of them could have made individually, but which they trusted he could not thus withstand the force of.

Le Vasseur heard them in silence. A smile was curling his lip. They thought it incredulity,

but it was despair! His hands trembled, his colour went and came, he sunk back in his chair, burst into a fit of loud hysterical laughter, and would have gone mad, had he not had relief in a passionate flood of tears. They were the first he had shed for many a day. When he came a little to himself he motioned to the door, and there was an awful dignity in his gesture which commanded immediate obedience. They left him; and in less than ten minutes they saw a servant leave the court-yard on horseback, at full speed, with a letter in his hand.

With that wilful deception which the most desperate cases cannot conquer, Madame Le Vasseur, Eugenie, and even St. Croix, felt convinced that the letter contained the pardon of Agnes. They proceeded once more to Le Vasseur's study, in half-satisfied anxiety that their belief would be confirmed. They were admitted. Le Vasseur was sitting in his chair, calm and unimpassioned. They ardently inquired what were the contents of his letter. Suddenly starting up, with a look of phrensy, and a tone of fearful energy, he cried, "my curse!"



Some hours after Madame Le Vasseur had quitted Agnes in the morning, the effects of the sudden and long protracted agitation became apparent in the latter. She felt every symptom of approaching delivery, and her husband hastened off to the town, which was at some distance, where resided the physician, who, being in her confidence throughout, expected the summons. Hardly had de Monigny lost sight of his dwelling, when the servant bearing Le Vasseur's letter arrived. The ignorant girl who had the care of her mistress immediately handed her the letter; and Agnes, recognizing her father's writing, opened it with the eagerness of hope. - She forgot for a moment her pains, and lost all sense of suffering in the magic of expectation. Her eye ran quickly over the few lines contained in the billet, when the horror-struck servant saw her sink back in the bed, uttering a piercing scream, the herald of a fit of violent convulsion. Shrieks of maniac wildness, the voice of mingled agony and delirium, burst loudly from her, and ceased but with one fierce and closing spasm, which, at

one and the same moment, gave birth to a fine female child, and broke the heart of the ill-fated mother !.

As de Monigny returned towards home, accompanied by the doctor, they heard the terrific accents. As they neared the house, the shriek was hushed ; and when they entered, Agnes was quite dead. The distracted servants, who stood by her side, did not think of going out to meet the husband's approach ; and as he rushed into the room, breathless and abrupt, such was the spectacle which met his sight.

The following evening Agnes was privately buried in the neighbouring cemetery, her hand, even in the grave, grasping the fatal letter which was the warrant of her death, and which had been in vain attempted to be taken from it. St. Croix and her younger brothers followed her to the grave. The eldest fled from his father's house, overwhelmed by the double shame which had fallen on his family, and the infatuated severity which had perpetuated its disgrace. Eugenie was dreadfully shocked on learning her sister's fate ; but the fears were exaggerated of

those who thought the intelligence would have endangered her safety.

The infant was alive and well at the time I heard these particulars, and had not to that day received a morsel of nourishment, except from the hands of its inconsolable father.



## LA VILAINE TETE.

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“ They who, by accident, have some inevitable and indelible mark on their persons, if they want not virtue, generally prove fortunate.”

LORD BACON.



# LA VILAINÉ TÊTE.

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## CHAPTER I.

I TOOK a boat on the Garonne, in the fall of the year, that treacherous season, when the varying tints of the foliage, like the hectic flush of consumption, make us forget the decay of nature, while admiring its loveliness. I sailed down the river as far as Pauilhac, a little port some leagues from its mouth; a kind of halting-place for vessels bound to Bordeaux, as Gravesend is to London.

The views on this part of the Garonne are fine, but can be scarcely called picturesque. The stream is too wide, its banks not high enough, and the country beyond too flat to entitle the landscape to that epithet so dear to travellers. But there are some interesting points: Lormont, for example, a village on the



right hand, inhabited chiefly by ship-builders, as is evident, from the many skeletons and newly-finished vessels standing on the stocks. A height rises abruptly behind the houses; and, being covered with vineyards to the top, has, till late in the season, a very cheerful and even romantic appearance. Some villages of less note; occasional villas belonging to the gentry of Bordeaux; the round fort in the middle of the river, called, from its shape, *le pâté*; and the towns of Bourg and Blaye, with the citadel of the latter, are the other stationary objects which attract attention. Then you have the ships scudding up or down the river; all sails set, and all hearts joyous, if the wind is fair; tacking and labouring, should it be foul. An occasional steam-boat is seen, plodding along like a Dutch merchant, enveloped in smoke, and turning neither to right nor left; while many little fishing smacks and pilot boats dance gaily on the waves, and plunge their prows through the spray.

I have not, perhaps, done justice to the beauties of the Garonne; but it must be re-

membered that I paint it *below* Bordeaux, as it appears to a man coming down the country, his mind filled with the inspiration of much finer scenes. Sailing *up* the river, after a voyage of some weeks, the impressions it excites are far different. I know this by experience; for I well recollect, that after the tedium of the sea, and the tossing of the Bay of Biscay, in one of its angriest moods, I thought the light-house of Cordouan the model of architecture, the bleak sands at the river's mouth the perfection of rural loveliness, and every spot as we ascended a little isolated Eden.

I need not tell my readers that the confluence of the Garonne and the Dordogne, just above Blayé, forms the Gironde, an extensive estuary, with all the attributes of the sea. A few leagues below this junction of the rivers I stepped out of the boat on the beach of Pauilhac, followed by Ranger, and accompanied by the ennui occasioned by my four hours' lazy voyage.

In visiting Medoc, I meant—the phrase is admissible from a sportsman—to kill two birds with one stone; viz. to see the principal growths

of those wines so palatable to us under the name of claret, and to enjoy two or three days' good shooting, which had been promised to me by a Bordeaux friend. But man is himself no better than the sport of chance and circumstance, and his most settled purposes are often, like scattered covies, disturbed and routed by feelings beyond their control, and which worry them without leave or licence. The morning after my arrival at Pauilhac, the glimpse of one old château was sufficient to drive both my purposes totally out of my head.

Having risen early, and taken to the road, I was proceeding towards the grounds of my friend, when this before-mentioned château lying in my path, I inquired of an old peasant the name of its owner. Stopping for a moment from his work of hedge-cutting, he turned round and answered, "The Marchioness de la Roche-Jacquelin."

"Indeed!" cried I, "is she here, then?" "Here! every body, who knows any thing of the marchioness, knows that she's at Paris," replied he, astonished, it would seem, at my



local ignorance, and in a tone of reproof, which seemed to accuse me of having insinuated an acquaintance to which I had not the slightest pretension.

“Indeed, my friend,” returned I, “I do know a great deal of the marchioness, although I never saw her, and was not aware of her residence.”

Our conversation ended here; and, wishing him a good morning, I walked towards the next village. A full tide of thought was rushing on my brain, and the name which had been just mentioned to me opened every sluice of memory. My whole mind was filled with the remembrance of La Vendée, so chastely and beautifully illustrated in the work of that interesting woman, whose property I now trod on. It was a situation fit to recal the emotions which I had so often experienced in La Vendée itself—that ground once eminent, and always sacred—and I felt my pulse swell, and my bosom throb, as they were wont to do, while standing on the spot immortalized by some glorious action, I paid my homage to heroism in its own

peculiar sanctuary. This is to me of all parts of France the most interesting: it is full of associations of the most inspiring nature; it awakens every thing lying dormant in the mind that bears relationship to valour or to virtue; it breathes an air of sympathy and sorrow into the heart, and arouses at once recollections of heroic devotion, and indignation for the ruin of this its noblest temple.

La Vendée, despoiled and desolated, is no longer what it was. The face of nature is not changed, but the movements which were wont to light up its features are gone by. The thickly-wooded landscape is the same as ever; the verdant mass of foliage, the gushing rivulets, the rising hillocks, the scattered villages, still show themselves. Isolated châteaux raise here and there their red-tiled roofs above the aged oaks; and many a blackened wall shows you where others stood, and *what* destroyed them. Man, too, is there: in fact, the district still exists, in all the visible signs of life; but the fine soul of its inspiration is no more. The mild, yet hardy nature of the people, is not

quite changed ; they are still hospitable, beneficent, and brave ; their cottages and their hearts are open to the stranger ; they share with him their humble fare, and the fulness of their sorrows — but they are a broken-down race. Their courage shines out on a sudden impulse or unexpected excitement ; but the natural tone of former intrepidity has died away in the artificial efforts which tyranny forced from them. The quickening impulse of domestic example has long ceased to animate the peasants of La Vendée. They see no more the lords of their idolatry living among them in the fellowship of honourable association, holding out the arm of power to cherish, not to crush, their followers ; giving notions of right, not by precept, but by action ; teaching religion, not by persecution, but by piety ; endearing peace, by deeds of quiet virtue ; and leading to battle by such spirit-stirring words as these : “ If I advance, follow me ; if I shrink back, kill me ; if I die, revenge me\* ! ”

\* Henri de la Roche-Jacquelin.



Such was the oft-indulged train of thought that came revived and fresh upon me as I now walked up to the rustic inn, whose designation was a withered branch of fir-tree, stuck in the wall, and a roughly-coloured print below it, representing a couple of jolly fellows sitting, glasses in hand, beside a huge crimson bottle, which shot forth a cloud of blue froth. "Good March beer," in large letters at the foot, was the key to this hieroglyphic, and a signal of invitation to the thirsty passenger. Sure of a welcome in the common home of every wanderer with sixpence in his pocket, I entered the house, and asked if I could have a bed for the night. A little hesitation on the part of the host, a few frivolous questions about my passport from the landlady, and some sly looks of mingled suspicion and coquetry from her chubby and sun-burnt daughter, all ended in the grant of my demand, and in my instalment in a snug little room looking out upon the garden. Being fairly in possession, I bethought myself of a very important and oft-required assistant in the arrangements of all men, but par-

ticularly of those who carry their wardrobe on their shoulders—I mean a washerwoman.

“O yes, sir,” said the landlord’s daughter, “to be sure, there’s a washerwoman in the village.—Shall I run and look for her?”

“If you please, after you have given me my breakfast.”

The washerwoman came in consequence; and, as I offered her a glass of wine from my bottle, she thanked me with an accent which I knew at once to be Vendéan. “What, you too are from La Vendée!” exclaimed I. “Alas! yes, sir,” said she, “many a long day; though I seem to bear the token marked on my tongue as firmly as it is stamped in my heart.”—She here wiped a tear from her eye. The poor woman had a very ill-favoured countenance; and as to the rest of her person, I can only say with Milton, that she had “fit body to fit head;” thus affording another proof that *proportion* may be prejudicial to the cause of beauty.

Her birth-place was, however, enough to ensure her my regard. We entered deeply into

chat ; and, in return to my many questions about the circumstances of the celebrated Madame de la Roche-Jacquelin and her family, she gave me much information. This, though interesting to the sensitive or curious reader, being of private and existing individuals, I do not feel myself warranted, by any example, to make public.

Our conversation insensibly turned on tales of La Vendée ; and half a day was thus spent before the old washerwoman bundled up my little packet of two shirts, two pair of——psha ! no matter—and bade me good evening. My mind was full of the subject ; and forgetting, for that night, both vineyards and partridges, I sketched the following *true story*, which, at my leisure, I put into its present form.



## CHAPTER II.

THERE is no truth more obvious than that vicious times afford the best field for the display of virtue; and never was the axiom more fully exemplified than during the progress of the French Revolution. Many people find it hard to mingle notions of virtue with the memory of that event; yet gratitude, humanity, and honour were never more frequent—because so many opportunities for their exertion have been rarely ever afforded. Such qualities as these are best understood by contrast; and, in fact, require the display of their opposites to bring them into action. Bad passions and bad men obtrude themselves upon us: the good must be called forth to be observed. Evil forms the foreground of the social picture, but brings out, rather than conceals, the amiable and mild perspective. The country, and the period in question, formed the mighty frame-work of this moral exhibition; and it was in La Vendée that

human nature appeared abstractedly the worst. It was there, too, that more instances of virtue occurred than in any other part. There the most hateful passions were let loose: Frenchman warred against Frenchman; the son battled against the father; brother was opposed to brother: yet there it was, amidst rapine, hatred, and revenge, that all the finer feelings of the heart were seen to flourish;

“Not in the sunshine and the smiles of Heaven,  
But wrapp’d in whirlwinds, and begirt with woes.”

In this isolated region resistance to the revolutionary spirit was not caused by feelings of a political nature. They were strictly private, and therefore more pure. It was not that the Vendéans wished to uphold the prerogatives of the crown, or the errors of the court. They were unconnected with the one, and ignorant of the other. The name of king excited in them feelings of endearment only as it was connected with the nobility, under whom they lived and thrived. Had these flung away their privileges and titles, the peasants would have been

as willingly republicans as royalists. Their hardy and unsophisticated minds cared nothing for distinctions. They were happy; they had every right which they required; and felt that attachment which free-born gratitude inspires. They took arms to protect their lords from injury, and their altars from pollution. Loyalty and religion were blended with the more domestic feelings; and the only ill they feared was the removal of that authority which elsewhere meant abuse, but was to them protection. It is this which sanctifies their struggles. Had the memory of their bravery and their misfortunes come to us merely as intrepid assertors of political rights, we should have felt for them all the admiration and regret which is due to unsuccessful courage. But the warriors of La Vendée take hold of our sympathies by tenderer, and even stronger, ties. In the soldier we see also the husband and the father. No cold-blooded mercenaries come to claim our compassion, but ardent patriots to command it. We view them in all the energy of home devotion—in all the softness of fire-side endear-



ment—in the strenuous exercise of domestic honour. Not rushing on from the impulse of unmeaning ambition, but rallying round their brave commanders with all the warmth of family regard; and fighting with them side by side upon their native fields, at once the cradle of their blessings and the sepulchre of their woes.

The events of the Vendéan wars abound with incidents of deep, but sorrowful interest. The fortunes and fate of the rebel leaders most naturally attract our attention; but the suffering was so general, there was such a perfect equality of wretchedness, that we cannot gaze upon the devotion of the chief without mingling our regards with that of his followers. Did I choose to work on high-wrought feelings; did I want a hero of romantic endowment or wondrous feats, they are to be had in rich abundance; but such was not my object: I chose a simpler theme and humbler actors, abandoning for truth all views of exaltation.

In the heart of that part of this devoted province, called *Le Bocage*, stood a retired straggling village, containing about twenty houses;

but these were so irregularly scattered, that they occupied a surface which might have sufficed for ten times the number. This village was far away from any high road; and, being skirted by impenetrable woods, and surrounded by rising grounds, it is impossible to imagine a more complete seclusion. The humble community by which it was occupied were ignorant of the world, and did not wish for worldly knowledge. Their pastor, a mild and amiable man, assured them that he had voluntarily renounced it, and that the votaries of fashion held a lot less happy than theirs. The seigneur, who lived in the château close at hand, was another practical example of the curate's veracity; for he also had for many years abandoned the pleasures of high life, and lived among his peasantry, more like a father than a master. These two authorities were all in all with the honest creatures whom they governed, and with a sway so gentle, that this influence was but their due. Nothing was more reciprocally amiable than the intercourse between these poor people, their pastor, and their lord. In each gradation there

was, to be sure, a variety of feeling; but it harmonized so well together, that it would be hard to point out the distinctions.

The church was a lowly edifice, suiting the humility of the teacher and his flock. The simple altar, and unornamented walls, formed a striking contrast with the gorgeousness of metropolitan embellishment; and, notwithstanding all that I have heard of "the majesty of religion," and the "magnificence of worship," I doubt whether the gilding and polishing of a Roman or Parisian temple ever reflected a congregation more devout than that which filled this modest sanctuary.—But nothing like fanaticism was known among them. They did their duty too well to have leisure for excesses; guilt rarely sullied the round of their occupations. The worthy curate often wept over the sorrows to which all, alas! are subject; but he as often smiled at the innocent eagerness with which his parishioners would labour to convict themselves of crime. Their confessions were frequent; their penances slight; and their absolution safely conceded. They were, however, as gay as they



were pious, and as fond of dancing as of prayer. They never neglected their devotions, or forgot their pleasures. The grass plat before the little church was the scene of their Sunday festivities ; and probably neither religion nor recreation was the worse for this affinity. The good priest presided almost as regularly at the one as the other. Reclined in the shade of a group of elms, as old as the ivy-covered walls of the church itself, his smiles gave a sanction to the pleasures on which he gazed. The village contained three or four musicians ; and the rustic concert often charmed to the spot the seigneur and his family, with any occasional guest who happened to be at the château. There was among the inhabitants an equality purely republican ; but they were unruffled by those dreams of vanity and ambition, to which even republicans are subject. They were all alike poor, industrious, well-disposed, and happy.—To trace the portrait of one family would be to give the picture of all.

The cottages, too, were nearly all alike ; but one was pre-eminent above the rest for the pe-

culiar beauty of its situation and its neatness. A French cottage, even now, when the political condition of the peasantry is so much improved, brings no idea of outward comfort to the mind. At the period in question its claims were still less; and in our village external slovenliness and dirt were as much apparent as in any other. But one habitation formed a pleasing exception to this general reproach. It stood apart from the others, on the banks of a rivulet which ran between the village and the wood. It was surrounded by a small garden, kept neat and blooming. The walls were covered with creeping shrubs; and flowering plants were placed around, carefully cherished in winter, and in summer fantastically arranged on benches built against the cottage. The well, sunk, as is usual, in the middle of the garden, and front of the house, showed nothing of naked deformity or uncouth ornament. Its wall, rising about three feet from the ground, was surrounded by a little hedge of myrtle and rose-trees, which, in the season of bloom and beauty, showed a profusion of gay flowers. A couple of vines

were trained along the front of the cottage, and their stems carefully preserved by a wooden covering nailed round them. Every thing within was in unison with the simple neatness without. The room, which served as kitchen and parlour, was furnished scantily, but cleanly. The copper vessels shone bright on the walls, and the table and chairs were white from regular and careful scouring. The sleeping apartment had a comfortable bed; a small closet adjoining the kitchen held another; and a couple of presses were well stocked with coarse, but wholesome linen, a luxury enjoyed by the French peasants to what we might think excess.

The owner of this humble, yet enviable mansion, was an old woman, bent down with age and infirmity. Her whole stay and solace in the world was her granddaughter, whom she had brought up—an orphan from the cradle. This poor girl was every thing that she could desire, except in one respect; and possessed all that her situation required, but one advantage, with which, it must be confessed, there are few who can well entirely dispense. Jean-



nette was amiable, cheerful, tender-hearted; a good spinner, active in household affairs, and pious; but beauty formed no part of her possessions; for she was in appearance ugly—not simply *plain*, but downright ugly. This utter absence of personal advantages had procured her among the neighbours the title of “*la vilaine tête*.” To let the reader judge whether or not exaggeration had suggested this epithet, the following portrait is given; and coming from a friendly hand, its truth may be relied on.

Jeannette was—but the pen refuses to proceed! It is, in truth, but an ungracious task, and cannot be persevered in. How different are the efforts to depict the traits of beauty! There is, indeed, enjoyment in dwelling on *their* memory: in essaying, however vainly, to commit to paper with pen or pencil the impressions they stamp upon the mind: in striving to trace out those indelible, yet shadowy recollections, which flit before the fancy so fairy-like, so lovely, so evanescent; inspiring to pursuit, yet baffling every effort at detention. How I have laboured at this hopeless task! How strove to

do justice by description to that face and form which are ever before my eyes ! How, while I thought to fashion out one feature, has the memory of another swam upon my brain, confounding all in an overflow of blending loveliness ! Even now, they seem to float before my gaze in the unfading sweetness which needs no contrast to increase it, which time and distance purify, but weaken not. But—but to return to my heroine ; that is, to poor Jeannette. There are cases where 'tis best to leave the reader to himself ; and this is one. Imagination may complete the portrait I would have commenced, without fearing to err by extravagance : let it paint her ever so unprepossessing in appearance, and it cannot go too far.

Jeannette, unlike most people, cared but little for that which she did not possess ; and was rather disposed to dwell upon those compensations which nature had given her. She knew that she was ugly—*very* ugly—but she felt that she was strong and healthy, and her composure was not ruffled. Her grandmother's cottage contained but little looking-glass to

throw reflections on her defect, and the neighbours were too good-natured to supply so unkind an office. I really believe that she thought so seldom of her face, and heard so little to make her remember it, that she only knew of its peculiarities from the faithful but officious brook in which she was accustomed to wash the linen of the cottage, and that of the neighbouring château, confided to her care. This was her chief employment, and, taking pride in doing it well, she was early distinguished as the best *savonneuse* in the village, and her own and her grandmother's caps and kerchiefs were by far the most conspicuous for their whiteness and getting up. This early accomplishment turned afterwards, as we shall see, to good account.

Jeannette, it will be easily believed, dreamt not of love or marriage. She certainly was never tempted to one nor the other. But somehow she never wanted a partner at a dance; her garden, in which she had such pride, was cultivated by the voluntary labours of the village lads; did any thing go wrong in the cottage, she was sure of the gratuitous aid of some



rustic mechanic; and on her *jour de fête* none of the girls around could show more of those interesting, though homely, tokens which affection presents to worth. Such is the power of virtue, and such the value in which the French peasants hold it, that Jeannette never knew what it was to be slighted or forgotten. It is true she was called *la vilaine tête*, but nicknames in rustic society are by no means tokens of ill-nature. A joke is there given and taken, as it ought to be every where, in good part; and the bitter sarcasms of good-breeding find no place in the unrefined enjoyments of country life. Jeannette bore her designation with great good humour, and custom quite reconciled her to it. She knew it was very just, and therefore was satisfied that she had no right to complain, truth being, by persons of her rank in life, seldom or never disguised. But she had another appellation, which might have consoled a more sensitive mind—that was, “The good Jeannette.” This was just as involuntary as the other, and not a bit more sophistical; for she was, to reverse a common expression, “as

good as she was *ugly*,”—and that is saying a great deal. Whenever a child was ill, or an old woman complaining, or if an accident happened to man or beast, Jeannette was ever one of the first to offer her assistance, and the last to discontinue it. She had also the great advantage of depriving envy of its sting; for, was one of her female companions ever so plain, she had a consolation in looking at Jeannette; and, was she ever so wretched, a comfort in listening to her. Her advice was sought for by her friends in all emergencies; and, what was more wonderful, it was almost as certain to be taken as asked. To make matters short, and tell a plain fact in few words, she had the blessings of the whole village, old and young.

Thus might she have run the quiet tenor of her way, and gone in happy obscurity down the stream of life, had not the public events which agitated her country forced her from her retreat. It may be a question whether or not she merits immortality. Even if she does, these pages do not hope to secure her that reward. Jeannette was exactly eighteen years of age.

when the village tranquillity was first disturbed by the sound of the tocsin of war. Alas! how wofully did that sound break over the stillness of the gentle night, to the ears of those who knew of what it was the signal. Jeannette was not one of those. She and her young companions had heard much of previous events. Every day was hot with accounts of distant movements and alarms; but in the gaiety of youth they believed that such disturbance could never come home to them, and they had no notion of the horrors they were so soon to witness. Jeannette was in bed, and on the first sound of the alarm-bell hurried on her clothes, and looked from the lattice to ascertain the quarter of the fire, supposing such to be the cause of the summons. She looked out, but all was darkness. No flame coloured the clouds which rolled heavily above, nor tinged the trees whose foliage overhung the cottage. The air was impervious to her inquiring gaze, and the low-breathing wind was scarcely strong enough to rustle the leaves around. This unusual repose of nature looked like the sleep of death.



Jeannette listened to the bell with a dread which no visible danger could have inspired; and she shuddered without knowing why. At length murmuring voices came upon the air, and a drum was loudly beaten. Shouts of assembling men were soon distinguished, and then the firing of distant musketry. Jeannette trembled in every joint, and stole from the closet where she slept, intending to pass softly through the garden, to demand at the next cottage the meaning of such awful sounds. She entered the kitchen, and was surprised to hear whisperings in her grandmother's apartment, and opening the door she distinguished by the glimmering of the little lamp, half-shaded to conceal the light, the old woman and two of her neighbours on their knees devoutly joined in prayer. The entrance of Jeannette made them start up in alarm; while she, terrified at their solemn and fear-stricken looks, flung herself into her grandmother's arms, and burst into tears.

When their agitation had subsided, Jeannette resolved on going out into the road which

passed before the garden, and connected the irregular and scattered cottages. She learned enough, from her grandmother's melancholy visitors, to know that the alarm without proceeded from the union of the villagers and the neighbouring peasants, brought together by the determination of the seigneur and the curé; who, tired of forbearance, had at length resolved on rousing the parish to the aid of the more forward opponents of the Revolution.

Jeannette resolved to go into the road and view the passing scene. She did so, but a comparative tranquillity had succeeded the recent tumult. Nothing was to be distinguished, but she trod on well-known ground; and, following the murmur of retiring voices, she soon reached the hillock upon which the church was built. The great entrance was open; and, to the astonishment of our heroine, a stream of light issued from it, flinging a wild and solemn glare upon the tall elms planted around. The pitchy darkness of the night made the contrast more striking, and the sighing of the increasing breeze in the viewless branches seemed the

utterance of awful and agitated nature. Scattered groups of peasants passed now and then across the illuminated space just opposite the church door, as they emerged from the gloom of one side, and with hurried pace, were lost in a moment in the darkness of the other. Some entered the church; a few stood still in deep and anxious conversation—but all were armed. Weapons of various kinds were borne by those sinewy arms, which grasped with indiscriminate vigour whatever could be turned to purposes of vengeance. As Jeannette leaned, pale and trembling, against a tree, she was startled by occasional shots from approaching parties of peasants, and gradually a number of fires were lighted on the rising grounds in the vicinity, bursting up in columns of flame and smoke, and casting a dark red gleam upon the woods below. While Jeannette contemplated, with breathless admiration, the impressive scene before her, a splitting shout burst from the holy edifice. She sprang from the earth at the electric sound. It was so unnatural—so demon-like, compared to the low murmurings of prayer



which were wont to breathe through the consecrated building, that she doubted for a moment the reality of what she heard. But another, of still louder and more lengthened tone, brought conviction to the agitated listener, who, hurried by an uncontrollable impulse, hastened to the open door to satisfy her intense and terrified curiosity. She stopped awhile under the porch which projected beyond the entrance. From thence she gazed upon the scene within. A mass of people of both sexes filled the body of the church. They were standing, and as they listened attentively to the discourse of the curé, hundreds of bayonets, pikes, and other martial instruments, glittered above their heads. The altar was lighted up as if for more than a common occasion; and on its steps stood the seigneur, accoutred in all the irregular array of rustic warfare. Beside him was the curé, dressed in the full splendor of priestly decoration. The first was a figure fit for the pencil of Salvator Rosa; hardy, inflexible, and firm. His careless apparel, flung on with the romantic grace of a bandit mountaineer; a leathern belt

around his waist, its large steel buckle shining between the rude carving of two enormous pistols ; his left hand grasping the hilt of an ancient and rusty sword ; the other supported on the muzzle of a brass barrelled carbine :— his black eyes shooting fire, and his deep-knit brow garnished by the raven curls which escaped from beneath a crimson handkerchief, tied tightly round his head \*. The priest might have been supposed the embodied form of one of Raphael's exquisite imaginings. His whole expression calm, inspired, ineffable ; his blue eyes beaming with a light as if from heaven ; the graceful drapery of his attire giving ad-

\* This head-dress, common to the Vendéan chiefs, was adopted from their heroic comrade, Henri de la Roche-Jacquelin, who was thus first distinguished in the revolutionary battles. He made himself a mark for the bullets of his enemies and the imitation of his friends. " Fire at the red handkerchief !" was repeatedly cried by the republicans who witnessed the uncommon valour of its wearer. His danger being pointed out to him, made Henri persist in what he had first done by chance ; and to save him from particular risque, all his brave companions followed his example. See *The Memoirs of Madame de la Roche-Jacquelin*.

ditional height to his tall spare form ; his sallow cheeks showing, in transparent currency, the blood which mantled through them. The seigneur stood fixed and statue-like, as if motion was stopped by the intensity of some determined thought. The curé had his hands raised in the energy of eloquence, while he harangued his ardent congregation. The distance allowed but a part of his oration to reach the wondering ears of Jeannette. She, however, distinguished enough to inform her that he was exciting his listeners to battle, and promising them victory. In the first instant of surprise she fancied herself the dupe of some illusion ; and she sought to doubt the identity of those before her. Were they not some impudent impostors, dressed in masquerade ? Could that be the placid seigneur ? Could that be the meek and merciful preacher of forgiveness ? Such were the natural doubts of the uninformed Jeannette. But it is not strange that persecution should arouse the most sensitive feelings of the soul, nor that forbearance should be turned to vengeance by the hatred of oppression. So it was now with these



altered associates, who seemed to revive the days of old, when the high priest Joad preached revolt against the tyranny of Athalia; or the more recent times, when Peter the hermit poured forth his irresistible eloquence to the warriors of the cross.

Jeannette listened with a fixed and half-unwilling conviction to the discourse of the venerable ecclesiastic. His words appeared to flow from the impulse of inspiration, and at every pause reiterated shouts burst from the highly excited throng. The skilful orator saw that his point was gained. The energy of deep devotion was blended with valorous ardour; and, while enthusiasm seemed at its height, he took from off the altar a flag of white silk. With his face again turned to his audience, he waved the snowy banner, in impassioned grace, above his head. As it floated round him, his long grey locks were agitated by the air—his countenance beamed bright—his whole frame was moved with fervid agitation, and he looked the semblance of something more than mortal. The people gazed on him awhile in reverential

silence, waiting for the sounds of his sonorous and impressive accents. "Behold, my children," he at length said, "the banner of your God, your country, and your king!" The crowd caught anew the lightning impulse from his look, and a loud and long continued cry of "God, our country, and our king!" re-echoed through the church. "Let us now consecrate this sacred symbol of virtue and of valour!" He performed the ceremony with pious fervour. When it was finished he spoke once more. "Who now volunteers to guard the holy banner?" Scarcely had he pronounced the question, when a crowd of young men sprang over the railing of the altar, and with brandished swords hurried, in friendly contest, to seize upon the flag. The seigneur assisted the curé in repressing their zeal, and the former exclaimed aloud, "No, my friends—be this honour mine! It is the only distinction I claim from you. For the rest, we will march together to the combat. We will fight side by side—conquer together, or, if it must be so, die. Look ever to this symbol of our cause: while

it floats above me, the path of glory is not distant: when it falls to earth—then dig your standard-bearer's grave!" The young aspirants yielded to the claim of their chief; spontaneous acclamations again arose; the people flung themselves into each others' arms; while the clashing of swords, and rolling of drums, formed a wild and singular accompaniment to the enthusiasm and harmony of the scene.

The curé waved his hand. All was still. "Raise now your voices to the throne of grace—let your artless anthem bear on high the prayer of Christians, and the vows of patriots!" At these words the rural choir commenced a strain of rough and vigorous melody, in which the whole assemblage enthusiastically joined. The air was more martial than religious, and an unpremeditating pen had hastily adapted to it some stanzas which appeared appropriate. They were as follow:

## I.

Why linger we here, when the tocsin afar  
Through our villages rings?—let us on to the war:  
Let us on, ere the false one write shame on our crest,  
To the battle, VENDEANS—our banner is blest!



## II.

Proud bearer, whose task is to guard it from stain,  
Wave high the white symbol, and lead to the plain :  
There be regicide cheeks that shall vie with its white,  
As its tricolor rival sinks down in the fight.

## III.

Let them come when they list, in their rebel array,  
We have hearts for the onset, and swords for the fray :  
For our homes and our altars to vengeance we spring,  
And God shall be with us, for country and king.

## IV.

Lead on, gallant bearer ! high blessing and vow  
Have been breathed on our banner—why linger we now ?  
Our weapons are out, and the scabbards flung by,  
And we swear, by that standard, to conquer or die.

The effect of this chant, if not its harmony, was greatly increased by being joined in by the whole assembly. The untutored crash of such a strain was stunning, but impressive. When the last sounds ceased to reverberate, the curé again shortly addressed the crowd. His looks were once more changed—his eyes were filled with tears. His voice faltered as he pronounced his parting benediction. His accents were those of tenderness and love, such as a

fond father would utter when separating from a favourite child. He had before raised their minds to the highest pitch of exaltation, he now melted their hearts. He told them to be merciful, as he knew they would be brave; and laboured to convince them that true courage was ever blended with humanity. He then cast over them the purifying water, symbolic of the holy dew of righteousness; and finally bade them farewell, as, headed by the seigneur, they sallied from the church; and the last words uttered by his almost exhausted voice were, "March firmly, my children—the God of battles guides and guards you!"

The crowd rushed past Jeannette without perceiving her, and almost unperceived. Her whole attention was riveted on the interesting being whose fervid eloquence had chained her to the spot. She saw him at last sink down upon a bench, as the last stragglers quitted the church. Two or three attendants remained with him, and with upturned eyes and quivering lips he seemed to murmur the remains of an unfinished prayer. Jeannette turned towards

home, where, she began to recollect, she would be anxiously expected. As she descended the sloping ground, she looked around her. The signal fires had almost all burned out. Here and there an occasional burst of flame told that the latest was expiring, and in some places a mass of glowing embers relieved the sombre shades. As she paused an instant at the foot of the hillock, she turned towards the church. The door was on the point of being closed, and the stream of light shut from her. There was no one near—all seemed desolate. The women of the village had, together with those who followed their husbands and fathers from the country, almost all set out in mournful escort to the departing warriors. A glimmering light from a few of the cottages told that old age or infirmity kept watch within. As Jeannette reached her home, her own little beacon was the only perceivable object, and nothing was to be heard but the distant trampling of the fast-going crowd, and the savage yet thrilling strains of their loud-sung chorus.

But I must pass over the details of this por-



tentous night, nor dwell upon topics of distress, so often and so well described. From this moment no sounds of joy were heard in the once happy village, if we except the shouts of occasional triumph, resembling tiger-yellings more than tones of natural delight. The church bell no more rung out for prayers; its tolling now announced but blood and battle. The sports and labours of the fields were abandoned for their fiercer pursuits. Training, exercising, marching, occupied the young men in their occasional relaxations from combat, and the old inhabitants had no heart for industry. The cheerful Sunday ball no longer called the lasses to its innocent enjoyment. A care-worn expression hung on every face, and haggard looks gave evidence of sleepless nights and agitated hearts. Each day was big with new events: some fresh encounter, some impending danger, some hard-earned victory. Many a gallant youth of the village lay unburied on a distant battle-field; and others, after every action, returned to die—wounded, worn down, and mutilated. The women took various parts in these

afflicting scenes. They were prohibited from following the Vendéan armies, and therefore the great body remained, and performed all the duties of guard-mounting and patrolling, like experienced soldiers. But many, disguised as men, girded on swords and mingled in the ranks, leaving their aged parents or their infants to the care of the feeble or the timorous who staid behind. Our heroine was one of the latter, for she possessed a tender, and even weak, nature; but she was eminently useful in the natural occupations of her sex. The church had been converted into a hospital, and under the directions of the worthy curé, and a surgeon appointed to the charge, it was soon considered as one of the chief dépôts for the victims of war. The principal hospital of La Vendée was at St. Laurent, a town on the river Sevre, at a considerable distance from our village; and there was the chief rendezvous of the *Sœurs de Charité*, that sublime association, whose virtues half compensate for the folly or the vice of other orders, wearing the semblance of religion. Thus deprived of the services of

the sisterhood, the women of the village were obliged to supply those offices, to the performance of which the former were wholly consecrated. The hearts of the female peasants readily prompted them to the arduous undertaking; and that knowledge of the simple medicines of nature, and, above all, that benevolence of disposition so general among this class in France, fitted them well for the fulfilment of such duties.

The secluded situation of the village spared it for some time from the actual presence of either army. It lay far from the high-road, and was only resorted to for forage or recruits. But soon the wide-spreading force of the Republican arms drove the gallant warriors of La Vendée to the most remote and difficult positions. The village became the head-quarters of one of the retreating bodies of royalists, and presented a scene quite novel to its remaining inhabitants. Cannons, baggage-waggons, and cavalry, continually moving through the road; drums and trumpets ever sounding; constant parades; warlike accoutrements filling every cor-



ner and crevice of the cottages ; soldiers, if we may so call the untrained bands of Vendéans, leaning across the doors and windows, sleeping on the benches before them, or lounging in strange groups at corners. Slaughtering of cattle to supply the messes ; the gardens trampled on, and laid waste by marauders—in short, all the bustle and misfortune of an ill-regulated military possession. The seigneur was one of those who, having escaped death in several desperate encounters, had reached again his own roof, to enjoy awhile the scanty repose which anxiety allowed him. The general commanding, with his staff, was of course lodged in the château, and the reputation of Jeannette procured her the appointment of washerwoman to the whole establishment. This gave her ample employment night and day, but being well recompensed for her trouble, she did not grudge it ; and for some weeks she prudently hoarded up all the money she received, to be at hand in case of an emergency.

The parties which, from time to time, went out on scattered expeditions, brought back (but not often) occasional prisoners to the village.

At the general assemblage of the Vendéan armies, held some time before at Chollet, it was determined that no quarter should be given; and the shocking nature of the subsequent conflicts rarely allowed the infringement of the order. The few prisoners spared were solely for the purpose of obtaining information, and these wretches were generally reserved for a miserable fate. In relation to them every gentle feeling seemed commonly stifled, and a principle of terrible retaliation governed their exasperated foes. Dragged along, bleeding and exhausted, they used to enter the village more dead than alive; and, after their examination before the chiefs, they were cast into some deserted cottage, or loathsome outhouse, converted into a prison, often to expire of disease and neglect. But many a heart bled silently for their sorrows; compassion even here triumphed over the excitement of the darker passions; and some of these unfortunates were spared to repay their preservers' bounty, and rescue human nature from unlimited reproach.

One night, as Jeannette was busily employed

in preparing some linen, to be delivered at the château the following day, a gentle knocking at the outer door aroused her from her work. She raised the latch unhesitatingly, knowing that the village was occupied by friends; but the object which presented itself made her start back affrighted. It was a soldier in the Republican uniform. He wore the national cockade, but no more dangerous symbol of his profession or opinions. He was unarmed. His face was pale, and an open wound upon his forehead, with the clotted blood which had trickled from it, increased the ghastliness of his hue. One arm was bound with a coarse handkerchief, and supported by his cravat, converted into a sling. He had neither shoes nor stockings. His garments were torn in several places, and covered with dust and mire. He was altogether a miserable figure. He addressed Jeannette in a hurried, yet insinuating tone, and entreated her to admit him, and shut the door. She did so, for there was a something in his look and manner that disarmed her of her fears. The stranger was young, and, notwithstanding his



wretched plight, the indelible traits of beauty were stamped upon his countenance. There was, too, a touching softness in his voice ; and his forlorn and perilous condition awoke at once that pity, so hard to be distinguished from a feeling still more tender. Jeannette was a steady royalist, and till now had instinctively shuddered with dread at the bare thought of a republican ; but a sudden chill seemed to creep across those loyal antipathies which were wont to flow so warmly ; and, I fear, I am reduced to the dilemma of confessing the plain truth with regard to our poor heroine. Yes, the long-stagnant sensibilities of her nature were at once let loose—the thousand kind emotions of her heart, so often lavished in indeterminate yet amiable profusion, were in a moment fixed, brought home, concentrated—and she experienced all that instant rush of inspiration which is defined, most fitly, by the pithy phrase of “ Love at first sight.”

La Coste, for so the stranger named himself, shortly informed Jeannette that he was one of the enemy that day brought a prisoner to the

village from a neighbouring skirmish; that he had been, in the afternoon, examined by the royalist officers, and afterwards thrust into a wretched hovel, with all the misery, but none of the security, of confinement. He had just availed himself of the carelessness of his guards to effect his escape, when, in search of some hiding-place, he was attracted by the light in the cottage window. He knew, he said, that he ran a fearful risk; but seeing through the lattice that there was only a woman, and that a young one (he could not force himself to say a pretty, or even an interesting one—words so common), he relied on her compassion overpowering every feeling of harshness or hostility. He intreated her to protect and shelter him—and she did so. There was no time for hesitation, had she even been disposed to hesitate; but of this it will be believed she never thought, for most of my readers will possibly be able to testify, that when people surrender the heart, they are seldom difficult as to yielding up the house. She led him softly to her little closet, and insisted on his occupying her

bed. Should any one be disposed to shrink from this arrangement, I must beg them simply to consider that Jeannette was a peasant girl, not versed in nice distinctions—innocent and ugly—and also that this was a case of life and death. She warmed some water, and washed his wounded forehead and his lacerated feet. Her hospital experience was now of infinite value, and she exercised it with a tender alacrity, which she was astonished to acknowledge greater than usual. She next bound up his contused arm, and gave him, from the little store of the cottage, something to eat, with a bottle of wine, all of which he readily disposed of. Jeannette had seen enough of wounds to know that his were but slight; and, though not quite conversant in theories of animal appetite, she felt there was not much danger to be apprehended from the specimen which his exhibited. Neither was she alarmed to observe some symptoms of drowsiness display themselves in her patient's visage. She begged of him to give free indulgence to his evident inclination to repose. Prompted for a time by



his expiring *politesse*, he made some faint objections; but yielding at length to her solicitations, and his own desires, he nodded an involuntary assent, and closed his eyes on such flagrant breach of gallantry. Jeannette had thus the satisfaction of seeing him sink into a profound sleep, and she then took possession of an arm chair by the kitchen fire, where she sat the whole night ruminating on the oddness of her adventure, and forming plans for escaping from its dangers.

Her cogitations were serious and embarrassing, but mixed with them was a certain buoyancy of feeling wholly unaccountable to its possessor. She felt that in harbouring an enemy to the cause, she was doing it an injury—that in concealing a man, particularly as he was concealed, she was committing, at least, an indiscretion. She knew that in case of discovery she should certainly incur high censure; perhaps disgrace and punishment. But she seemed to rise superior to party feeling, to prudery, and even to prudence; and an inward whispering seemed still to tell her that her fears

were visionary, and her risk chimerical. She wondered what it could be, yet scarcely liked to ask herself what it was. She felt an awkwardness she knew not why, and yet it was so pleasing she was unwilling to wish herself quite at ease. She turned the matter over in every way; viewed her situation in all its aspects, and found it always to preserve the same face, like portraits, which, observed from whatever position we will, seem ever to fix their eyes full upon ours. It was thus that on every account she felt bound to save the young man. She resolved to do so at all hazards, and, as soon as the first glimmer of morning light broke through the lattice, she approached the closet to tell him so. He still slept. Jeannette wished him awake, and strove to persuade herself that it was merely for his safety she wished it; but she longed notwithstanding for the soft expression of his gratitude, which she knew would follow her communication, for his gentle accents were still tingling in her ears. She could not, however, summon up the courage to disturb him, and she retreated softly to the

kitchen again. The lark was by this time winging his heavenward flight, and the chirpings of the less aspiring songsters called Jeannette to the window. As she opened it, the breeze rushed in upon her fresh and familiar; and she thought that, in spite of her peril, she never felt so light and happy. She looked out revived and joyous, but her heart's blood seemed suddenly congealed when she saw approaching from one of the opposite cottages three or four armed men, whom she rightly conjectured to be a part of the evening guard in search of their fugitive foe. She hurried into his hiding-place, and not having the power of utterance, she shook him into sensibility, and a sense of his danger. Time was precious: security was the first consideration; and in order to it he was obliged to submit to the unpleasant necessity of being covered with a huge heap of the unwashed linen, which Jeannette threw carelessly over him, leaving but a small opening at the back part of the bed, through which he had just room to breathe. This being arranged, she spread her table in the



kitchen for the apparent completion of her task; and had just renewed it, when the door was unceremoniously burst open by the dreaded visitors. We must not, however, mistake their motives, nor imagine from their conduct any thing derogatory to the respectability of our cottage friends. Suspicion never ventured to light upon their loyalty, but their well-known humanity caused them to be doubted on this occasion. To the opening interrogations Jeanette could make no reply. She trembled in visible agitation; and the rude remarks of her inquisitors awakened the old woman in the room within. Her thoughts, which had been latterly in constant movement, and turned unceasingly on the subject of revolutionary alarms, immediately pictured, in the rough figures that now entered her chamber, the living apparitions which her imagination had conjured up. Her consequent scream came like confirmation to the suspicions of the soldiers. They therefore proceeded with increased asperity to announce to the dame the nature of their visit, and to commence without delay its business. When

she rightly understood their meaning, and her own safety, her feelings took a new turn, and rage usurped the throne just vacated by terror. She gave vent to her resentment in a shower of such reproaches as weak people, in their anger, are wont to lavish on those friends from whom they dread no retaliation. The soldiers smiled, and continued their search. They poked their heads into every nook sufficiently capacious, and their bayonets where those could not enter. The very sanctuary of the old lady's repose was violated by this pointed scrutiny; and when satisfied that no living thing lurked beneath the blankets, they proceeded to the closet of Jeannette to repeat the operation. The suffocating heap which covered her bed was just about to be submitted to the like examination, when the old woman fiercely interposed, exclaiming that it was the general's linen, in time to save the heap from perforation, and the whole secret from discovery. Jeannette stood silent and almost senseless, being unblessed by the force of mind which enables us to overcome our feelings, or the power of deception which teaches us to

conceal them. The old woman, taking advantage of the hesitation which her last appeal had produced, assumed a higher tone, and threatened punishment for the affront thus inflicted on one of the functionaries (that was the washerwoman) of the right (that was the royal) cause. The soldiers, brought to their recollection, began to look like agents who have exceeded their powers. They gave one secret, searching glance at the old woman, and another at Jeannette. The demeanor of the first disarmed suspicion, while the looks of the latter defied it. The old woman's countenance beamed indignant innocence, and he must have been indeed a clever physiognomist who could have discovered a secret in our heroine's illegible face. Baffled in their object, the party retired, and before night the pursuit was abandoned for the observance of more material concerns.

The approach of the republican army, in all the flush of victory, was this very day announced at quarters; and the village had been fixed on, in a council of the chiefs, as the spot most favourable to the junction of the royalist di-



visions, for the purpose of risking a general action. Great bustle of course prevailed, and the minds of all being occupied in anticipations of the coming contest, Jeannette was for several days left unmolested to the discharge of her duties towards her interesting invalid. I pass over the detail of the many difficulties she experienced in concealing him from her grandmother's observation. These, however, she surmounted with an address surprising to herself, proportioned to her former ignorance in the science of hypocrisy; and which gave La Coste a notion of her cleverness, exaggerated by the contrast of his first impressions. He had a less arduous, but more wearisome, part to play;—to suffer that state of demi-existence where the body is obliged to lie passive and inert, while every energy of the mind gains new activity, and the brain seems wearing out the frame-work that contains its busy machinery. He lay for most part of the day in bed, nearly smothered by the weight of clothes which his considerate protectress took care to heap upon him. When cramped and exhausted almost

beyond endurance, he used occasionally to creep from his concealment, and screened by some linen, which Jeannette hung before the door and window as if to dry, he snatched the indulgence of a few stooping, distorted turns up and down the closet (which was three good paces in length), and then stole again into his covert. At night his situation was more tolerable. The weather at the time was happily dark and clouded, and he might with safety sit at the open casement breathing the freshness of the midnight air; and he sometimes even stepped boldly out into the little garden, unable to resist his desire to tread the earth once more, and feel himself half free.

Dread of discovery, which would not only bring down certain ruin upon him, but as infallibly compromise the safety of his preserver, obliged him to retrench this only solace of his imprisonment. Returning into his closet, he was always sure to perceive the little table covered with an ample supply for that appetite which convalescence every day increased, and over which confinement exercised its control in

vain. He had no longer any bodily ill, for the application of Jeannette's simple remedies had already removed every obstacle to the recovery of his strength. The consequent consumption of bread, cheese, and eggs was enormous, and perfectly incomprehensible to the old woman, who saw, of a morning, a complete clearance of as much food as used to serve for three or four days provision for herself and Jeannette. The latter had been ever a remarkably poor eater, but she all of a sudden proclaimed a hunger that verged upon voracity; and, what was still more extraordinary to the grandmother, it was at night that this miraculous increase of appetite was principally displayed. To sausages Jeannette, from her earliest moments, had had a decided antipathy. The old woman well remembered that when the poor girl, at six months old, had lost her mother, and with her the natural nourishment of her age, a tender-hearted neighbour who stood by, in the act of eating one of those savoury preparations of country cookery, would have soothed the crying infant by a morsel of the tempting relish; but the



shock inflicted upon the palate of the child was so severe, that she never could overcome the dislike—yet of a dozen of these delicacies, now presented to her grandmother by a neighbour, only two were suffered to proceed on their original destination. Jeannette arrested the progress of the others. She put in her claim to their possession, and seemed resolved, by this sudden affection, to atone for her long indulged hostility. Wine, too, which she had before now rarely tasted, became a matter of absolute necessity. She proclaimed herself in daily want of a portion, more than had formerly served her for a month. The fact was, that she was afraid to take the unusual step of seeking abroad those supplies which her patient required, and preferred exciting the astonishment of her aged relative to arousing the suspicion of her younger friends. She endeavoured to persuade the former that her marvellous appetite was the natural effect of her increased exertions; but this did not satisfy the old woman. Convinced that some miracle was working, she vainly exerted her conjectural faculties

to explain it away; and finding, at length, that it was too vague for her solution, she had recourse to her saint, whose name I am ignorant of, and whose power or inclination was, in this case, insufficient. Invocation, prayer, and perseverance were fruitlessly essayed for a whole week. The mysterious secret remained unsolved, and the piety of the dame, like that of many another pretending to more sanctity, being weakened by the want of immediate satisfaction, she abandoned her reliance on supernatural power, and was on the point of turning it into the channel of mortal sagacity—in fact, she had just resolved to consult the curé on the question, when the rapid march of events removed the necessity, as well as the opportunity, for so doing. In the meantime Jeannette employed herself in unceasing efforts for the advantage and comfort of her protégé. She supplied him with a pair of shoes, the best she had of two pair; and let not the idolater of female symmetry be agonised to learn, that they fitted him well, but rather loosely; for the foot of the young grenadier did not measure the

tenth part of an inch more in length. and considerably less than that in breadth, than the mark imprinted by our heroine in the mud, when she paced the winter pathways of the village. She supplied him, too, with stockings from her scanty store (but I am not prepared to treat of the mystery of *their* proportion). She employed herself at night in changing the whole arrangement of his dress. She cut his military coat into the jacket of a simple civilian; stripped it of its warlike ornaments, and turned the skirts into a cap. For ten nights she never slept but in the great chair before mentioned, and she was beginning to show evident marks of fatigue and anxiety. Her patient observed this, and he felt deeply both her kindness and her suffering. He bounded with ardour to be once more in action; he considered his concealment a disgrace, and burned with shame at the thought of being discovered by his comrades, on the triumphant entry which he anticipated, hidden under a bundle of foul linen!

The preparations for the battle were now coming to a close. The royalist position was



strengthened by every possible means. Redoubts were constructed on the rising grounds, trees felled in the plains below; the rivulets dammed up, to be let loose as the enemy advanced:—nothing, in short, was left undone to second the bravery of the peasant troops, whose courage was unabated, but whose tactics had gained nothing by experience. Daily skirmishes took place, and random discharges of artillery rolled their echoes round the village.

The troops on either side could with difficulty be restrained. Reinforcements thronged to the royalist lines; and the victorious enemy, approaching from all quarters, had ranged his battalions close to the front of their redoubts. The morrow of a gloomy evening was fixed on for the attack. The manœuvres of the republicans gave certain intimation of this, and the dawn was ardently watched for by their daring and desperate opponents. Every movement was known in the village, and reported accurately by Jeannette to the inquiring La Coste. His resolution may be anticipated. He was determined, at all hazards, to quit his conceal-

ment, and make an effort to join the republican army. Jeannette made no opposition: she knew it would be vain; and the certainty of losing him deprived her of all power of argument or entreaty. She passively assented to his plans. A leaden apathy seemed to weigh her down. As evening closed in, her oppression increased, mixed with a breathless gnawing anxiety of which she knew not the meaning. Who can define it; yet who has not felt it at the heavy hour of hopeless separation?

It became quite dark, and a heavy rain poured down as if expressly to increase the facilities for the escape. The old woman had retired to bed, in the hope of snatching some repose from the constant agitation which preyed upon her. Jeannette had prepared a little repast for La Coste, but when she offered him to eat he could not touch it! This sudden failure of appetite was no trifling proof of sensibility. Jeannette knew better than any one how to measure its force; she felt it fully, and could not restrain her tears. But she turned from him, lest he should observe or be infected by her

weakness. She opened a drawer, and taking from it a small leather purse, which contained all the earnings of her several weeks' work, she put it into his hands. He refused it by every declining gesture, for he was unable to speak; but she insisted by entreaties, silent but yet so powerful, that he at last consented, and placed it in his bosom, saying, "Until to-morrow, since it must be so." Had he known it to have contained the whole of her little store, would he, on any terms, have been persuaded to accept it, or have suffered any hope, however sanguine, to have made him risk the contingencies of the morrow? I think not.

The final moment of parting was at hand. La Coste saw clearly the workings of Jeannette's despair. They pained him, but he had no reciprocity in her pangs. He was more and more impatient to depart, for he felt not that desperate enjoyment which leads the lover to cling on in agonized procrastination to the misery of such a moment. Jeannette was not so utterly involved in her own sorrow as not to see the actual extent of his, or the delicacy



which still kept him near her. She made one struggle: she opened the little window. He eagerly caught the permission thus given him, and stepped out into the garden. She pointed once more to the path leading to the wood, where he trusted to find an opening beyond the extent of the royalist lines. He pressed her chill hands to his lips, and tenderly uttered, "God bless you, my preserver! expect me to-morrow." She faintly whispered, "Adieu!" and in a moment he was lost in the darkness. The pattering of the rain drowned even the sound of his footsteps. The shock was instantaneous, and poor Jeannette sunk back in a chair, quite stupefied with sorrow.

The dawn was fearfully ushered in. Cannon and musketry heralded its earliest beam: Jeannette started at the first discharge, from a state of several hours unconsciousness. She knew not if she had slept, for no dream had left its shadowy trace on the monotony of her repose. She had been, perhaps, in waking insensibility—no memory of her thoughts remained to mark the hours. All that she recollected was the

parting movement of La Coste, and his gentle murmur, "Expect me to-morrow." Her first impulse was to spring forward to the window, as in hope to catch another glimpse of his retreating form—but the flash of morning light just breaking o'er the heavens, struck her back in shocked amazement. How had the night elapsed, and where was *he*? The thundering roll of the artillery gave reply, and the reality rushed upon her with that overpowering abruptness which seems to stifle thought, while, at the same time, it gives new nerve to the mind's energies. She flung open the cottage door, and, as if every feeling was absorbed in the one great object of discovering *him*, she ran at her utmost speed to the nearest rising ground in the direction of the battle. As she reached the summit of the little hill, shouts of triumph broke upon her. She saw the women of the royalist army, with frantic yet joyous gestures, waving handkerchiefs, dancing, singing; while, in a cloud of smoke below, she distinguished the great body of the Vendéans rushing on the republican lines, and sweeping every thing

before them. Their impetuosity had led them to anticipate the meditated attack, and scarcely had the opening roar of the redoubts commenced, when they precipitated themselves from their position with a movement as unlooked for as it was resistless. The chiefs knowing how to profit by this impulse—and which was, indeed, their only knowledge in the arts of war—threw themselves before the troops with their accustomed gallantry. The republicans kept up awhile a murderous fire, but they were every where broken. The advantages of one side, and the disorder of the other, were, however, but temporary. The courage of the republicans was unshaken, and after a little breathing time given by a moment's check which their violent antagonists experienced, they turned round with all the steadiness of veterans, and changed the fortune of the day. The Vendéans fell back, but not in flight. They opposed no well-trained masses to the advance of the enemy's columns, but flinging themselves behind the hedges in scattered groups, they forced their opponents to attack



them in detail, and the fight became a bloody struggle of man to man. When personal prowess is the sole resource between foes equally brave, and alike enthusiastic in their respective causes, it is numbers alone which can be expected to decide the contest. This preponderance was at the side of the republicans, but their superiority in tactics was here of no avail. Their generals even were obliged to abandon their knowledge of manœuvring, of discipline, and command, to combat foot to foot with some sturdy peasant, who forced them, by his way of fighting, to acknowledge his equality. The Vendéans at length abandoned the valley, and as they more rapidly retreated up the rising ground, the panic-struck females fled towards the village, uttering the most fearful shrieks. One alone remained: it was Jeannette, who stood in silent and awful observation. From the moment in which she had reached the summit of the hillock, her eyes had been fixed on the scene of blood below her. Fear never entered her heart: its

whole emotions seemed changed from their usual course. She heard the angry voice of the combat—the whistling of the bullets—the clash of swords—the groans of anguish, without any one of those heart-sinking sensations which used to be excited by the most trifling sounds of danger or suffering. The only tone which seemed to impress itself upon her was the parting murmur of La Coste. “Expect me to-morrow,” was ever self-repeated in her brain; and in spite of improbability, of danger, and even of death, she clung with unshaken certainty to the fulfilment of the expectation. Her vacant stare looked for him in every group of desperate combatants. It rested the longest wherever the deadliest feats of valour were acting—for something told her that there should be his place. When a republican soldier fell to earth, she sickened with apprehension; but if one of her own party dropped under the blows of his antagonists, she felt on the contrary a sort of throb something quite different from pain. Jeannette, once or twice, during

her terrible suspense, was startled and shocked at this state of feeling. She had not, however, time to enter into its analysis, nor have I.

A general and overwhelming charge, which the open nature of the upland ground allowed the republicans to make, carried the broken parties of the Vendéans before it, as a shattered herd borne along by the flooding of some mighty stream. The mingled mass rolled onward towards the village, and Jeannette was hurried with it, stunned and almost stifled by the noise and pressure of the throng. The Vendéans seemed actuated by a single soul, for each individual, as he extricated himself from the multitude, made towards the church, as if in search of safety from its protection, or in determination to die under its venerated walls. The body of the building was already filled to suffocation, for the curé was within, celebrating mass to a mixed and melancholy congregation of distracted women, wounded and desperate soldiers, and those sick and fainting wretches who occupied their miserable beds in this hospital sanctuary. The little band of native warriors,



headed by the seigneur, made a bold stand to save their village from the pollution of the foe, and allowed an opportunity to the great retreating body to form a deep and solid circle round the church. Bent there upon their knees, or stretched prostrate on the earth, they invoked the aid of Heaven, and filled with momentary enthusiasm, they rushed again to the fight in renewed and firmer resolution. But the numbers of the enemy forced back all resistance, and advancing into the village, they commenced their horrid system of warfare, by setting fire to the cottages in successive order. That of our heroine being the very first on the course of the rivulet running parallel with the road, was one of the first in flames. She saw the faggots placed around it—the smoke and the fire burst up. She shuddered: she would have screamed, but her voice seemed choking her in every effort to articulate; and as the door began to crackle in the blaze, she fancied she heard from within the faint murmur of a female voice! It might be so—for from that hour she never saw her grandmother, and she never

knew her fate. The fragile frame-work of the rustic habitation was soon a blaze. The republicans rushed on through the fiery wreaths which rolled out on all sides, and the shrieks of the women and children, with the deeper execrations of the furious villagers, rose up like the discordant yells which poets have imagined to burst from Pandemonium, and mixed themselves with the triumphant shouts of their fierce assailants. Every hope seemed lost to the Vendéans. They were borne backwards even beyond the church; and the foremost of the enemy, with sacrilegious hands, applied their torches to the consecrated walls. The crumbling wood-works, dried by the heats of a hundred summers, caught quickly the assailing flames. The horror-struck congregation set forth one tremendous cry, and precipitated themselves on the incendiaries without. The rush was terrific. The republicans offered no resistance, for the demoniac passions of the day gave way to the natural humanity of the French heart. They could not raise their weapons against the flying crowd, but saw them scatter

across the fields without firing a single shot to increase the panic which impelled them.

At this instant the ceremony of the mass was finished. The curé had, with unruffled solemnity, performed its sacred mysteries, amidst all the appalling sounds which rose around him. He now descended the steps of the altar, and bearing aloft the chalice, containing the ingredients which the faith of such a being has almost the power to dignify into the reality of his sublimed imagining, he followed the impulse of the escaping concourse; and as the latest fugitive passed the wide-spreading blaze, he issued from the porch in all the majesty and might of holiness. He spoke not, but stopping for an instant, looked full upon the thousands of armed men who circled the little eminence. The effect was magical. The whole, as if struck by an electric pang, turned from him and fled. No voice was raised to stay them. No standard uplifted around which they might rally. All mingled in indiscriminate rout. The Vendéans saw this inexplicable scene. It appeared to them to exceed the possibilities of



human influence, and they attributed the miracle to the immediate interposition of the deity. The thought darted through them like inspiration; and, following their chiefs, whose efforts to reanimate them had been unceasing, they rushed once more around the church. The curé advanced, surrounded by the flames which the enthusiasm of his ardent observers converted into a halo of celestial glory; and with the utmost energy which his feeble frame allowed, he sang the chorus of their battle song. The wide air rang with the congregated bursts from every individual voice, and the torrent poured onwards. The Vendéans were stopped at every step by heaps of their dead comrades, who had fallen on the enemy's advance; but the speed of their vengeance overtook its victims, and a horrid carnage ensued. Frightful as these scenes are in themselves, there are times when they borrow from circumstances a character of exaggerated atrocity—and this was one. When the business of death is wrested, in a measure, from the agents to which

its infliction seems appropriate; when men consign the work of slaughter to feebler hands; when woman bears her part in the battle; and childhood sports among the bodies of the slain, and dabbles its innocent fingers in their blood.

The village was soon cleared of the hated intruders, but a strong reserve, posted on the heights by the wary and experienced Westermann, arrested again the advance of the Vendéans, and finally turned the scale of victory against them. Still, however, they pressed onwards; and foremost among the brave was the seigneur, who seemed actuated by the feeling that courage, on such ground, was his more peculiar privilege. He bore the banner in his left hand, and, with his sword, carved for himself a passage through the thickest of the fight. Jeanette, borne by the current of the crowd, saw him one instant separated by a circle of the enemy from his companions, and fighting with desperate valour. In the next, the white flag sunk below the heads of the combatants, and when her gaze again fixed upon its hapless

bearer, she saw him carried towards the village in the arms of four of his own soldiers, mangled and lifeless.

With the death of their beloved chieftain, and the fall of the banner, seemed to sink the hearts of its supporters. Actual flight was incompatible with the valour of their officers—La Roche-Jacquelin, Lescure, de Marigny, Bonchamp, are names which warrant this assertion; but they nevertheless fell back, fighting step by step their bloody way. Jeannette, whose personal fears and hopes were merged in the general horrors around her, forgot all private feeling, and thought her heart would break at the contemplation of the universal misery. She put up some short irregular prayers, and experienced, what most of us have sometime or other felt, the ineptitude of stated and stately invocations to scenes of imminent alarm. Her whole thoughts seemed to turn towards the saintly man who in this hour appeared, by his profession as well as his virtues, to approach the nearest to that power in whom alone was hope for safety. She hurried to and



fro across the battle field, and often—alas! how often—turned shuddering from the hacked and bleeding victims of the direful day; from the ferocious enemy howling forth his curses as he died; or the acquaintance or friend stiff in death, and consuming in the blaze of his own cottage. At length she caught a glimpse of the holy father, and flying over many a horrible impediment, she threw herself on her knees beside him, and sought to cover herself with the skirt of his mantle. He was bending over a wounded republican, and in the glow of piety administering the sacred rights of the church to the expiring sinner. He was surrounded by a heap of dead and dying. Several of the latter, of both parties, made straining efforts to crawl towards him. Some with piercing shrieks demanded his aid; while others, unable to articulate the wish, fixed their glazed looks upon him, as if the very beam of his eye poured consolation to their souls. The pressure of the enemy increased each moment, and a thickening shower of balls flew round the spot. Jeanette, forgetting in her fright the sacredness of

his occupation, and the veneration with which she was wont to look upon the priest, flung her arms around him, and in an agony of agitation implored him to save her. He turned calmly round, recognized her, and pointing his finger to Heaven, just uttered, "My child—" when his voice ceased, and falling from her faint embrace, he sunk to earth. Two bullets of a well-directed volley had pierced his breast, and forced the life-blood from his innocent heart. The warm stream covered the garments of Jeannette. She gazed a moment on his outstretched body, and then ran in frantic agony towards the home where instinct seemed to point her steps.

Unhurt, almost by miracle, she hurried through the scorched and suffocating air, in the direction of what was once the cottage. Its position alone enabled her to recognize it now, for not a half of the walls reared their blackened remains above the still-burning heap of rubbish. The garden was utterly destroyed. The vines which used to hang so gracefully above the door were now leafless and shrivelled;

and the branches of the beautiful acacias, which had so long shaded the roof, parched, shrunk, and crackling in the column of smoke which half hid their deformity. Many other sad and striking contrasts to its former state were offered to the miserable girl by the present desolation of her only home. She paced its limited extent, and sought, amidst its ruins, for her old and helpless relative, but in vain. Not even a vestige of the homely furniture had escaped the flames—all was consumed. Jeannette, giving way to a burst of utter agony, covered her face with her hands, and sank upon the smoking heap.

The clamour of the fight was gradually retreating. The still-prolonged struggle had left the village behind it, but many stragglers were flitting across the road, whose fierce and haggard looks might have suited the worst of the spirits of ill. Jeannette once more looked up, but not in hope. A mechanical movement, rather than an effort of the will, made her fix her gaze on the desolate scene around her. She had no longer aught to look for, for he alone on whom her thoughts could dare to rest



had either fallen in the fray or forgotten her. What, then, was her astonishment to see a republican soldier following the course of the little rivulet, as if its windings were his guide towards her, while, as he approached her, he pronounced her name! The voice was weak and hoarse—speaking exhaustion and pain. She thought she had never before heard it, yet whose could it be but *his*? She sprang upon her feet, and ran to meet him. When he perceived her, he increased his speed, and she saw, in his elastic bound, the ardour and animation of youth. He was too distant to allow of her distinguishing his features, but the image stamped upon her memory filled up the interval between her and him. She saw that he held his hand above his head, as if to mark to her that it contained some object destined for her. She involuntarily expanded her arms as though he were close to her embrace, when at the instant of his springing across the rivulet to cut off a turn which retarded his approach, a party of three or four Vendéans, retreating to the wood, discharged their carbines at him, and he fell

dead into the stream. Jeannette heard the report of the volley, and saw him fall, but could not—would not believe he was to rise no more. She flew to the spot. He had fallen on his face. His arms were extended before him on the bank; one hand holding firmly his musket, and the other Jeannette's leathern purse. She shuddered with a mixture of every horrible sensation as she gazed on this testimony of honour, feeling, and, she would have thought, affection. But even in this hour of anguish, reason made itself heard to check the latter belief. Scarcely conscious of what she did, she stepped into the stream, and raised the body up. At this moment the murderers reached the spot; and, in defiance of her entreaties, shrieks, and struggles, two of them forced her with them to the wood, while another rifled the body, and then flung it again indignantly into the water.

Arrived at the skirts of the wood, Jeannette cast back one glance upon the fatal spot where all her hopes were buried. She distinguished nothing but the smoke curling above the cot-

tage ruins, and the more distant blaze uprising from the church. Just as her conductors hurried her into the concealment of the trees, the roof of the sacred building fell in with a loud crash, and the yell which came down the wind announced the ferocious joy of its destroyers.

The contents of the purse were soon divided. Jeannette was offered some of her own money, but she shrank back from its acceptance. All that she asked for and procured was the black silk handkerchief, which she thought she recognized, and a scrap of paper, on which something was written unintelligible to Jeannette as well as the group around her. She felt, however, a tender expectation of finding some one capable of reading its contents; she knew not that La Coste possessed the accomplishment of being able to write. He had never said he did. But in her present wretchedness she dwelt on this proof of his modesty with a comfortless kind of satisfaction, of the same nature with that which she felt in the possession of this scrap of his original composition—for other she never thought it. She placed the paper in her



bosom, and tied the handkerchief round her throbbing head. For some hours she wandered in the skirts of the wood with her companions, and heard with indifference the various lamentations and threats of vengeance muttered against their victors. The evening fell at length. She took advantage of the dusk, left her companions, and emerged from the thicket. She soon arrived on the banks of the rivulet. She hastened towards the memorable spot. Bodies were scattered there in sad abundance, but it was impossible to distinguish any one amongst the heaps. The stream rippled redly on;—faint groans issued from the dying wretches washed by its sanguined waters—no other sounds were heard except the moaning of the evening breeze, and the broken murmurs of an impatient and gloomy band of republicans, to whom had devolved the task of burying their fallen friends. They were busily at work, and the echo of their spades, striking the branches of trees, stones, and other obstacles, fell upon the ear of Jeannette as a fitting consummation of this most terrible day. She tottered towards

the ruins of the cottage. Faint, and sick at heart, she had just strength enough left to reach the spot, when she fell down exhausted, and as she thought expiring.

She lived, however, to see other, and, perhaps, more wretched days; for with the morrow came that loneliness of heart which follows the loss of happiness, unsupported by the stimulating anguish, whose violence seems to lift us above the reach of despair. The hour of earliest suffering is certainly not that of greatest sorrow—for in the first the intensity of the feeling weakens its effect. The heart-strings seem drawn up in defiance of actual pain; and the shock falls down with such a general pressure, that no individual sensation has power to attribute it to itself. But when the mind relaxes from this tension, and the memory can take in the blessings we have lost, as well as the infliction which destroyed them, then comes the reign of indescribable distress; when the heart seems balanced in a cold and desolate void—as if no blood ran through it, and no fibre touched it. Such were the waking feelings of Jean-

nette when the hot sun-beams shone upon her wretchedness. Parched, cold, feverish, and forlorn, she raised her heavy head to meet the light. She left her retreat, and turning to the rivulet, would have quenched in its quiet stream the fire which seemed consuming her. Arrived at the brink, she shrank back in unspeakable disgust on seeing the water still tinged with the blood of the preceding day. She next turned her steps towards the village.—The village! It existed, alas! no more. All traces of resemblance were gone by. The houses were every one destroyed; whole gardens rooted up; trees cut into pieces by the shots; branches shorn away and scattered on the ground: the very earth transformed into a monument of ruin; the road and the fields furrowed alike into one mass of mud, and strewn with the yet unburied bodies of the Vendéans, and all the accumulated fragments of the battle. No living thing relieved the desolation, or bore witness to the dreary scene.

Jeannette proceeded in the direction of the château, which lay at the further extremity of



the village. She soon perceived it, and to her utter surprise it was entire. Smoke issued from its tall, dark chimneys, but it was the token of good cheer, and not destruction. As she approached, a ruffian-looking republican rushed out, and, in a ferocious tone, demanded what she wanted. She nearly sunk to the earth, and lost all use of speech. He again fiercely addressed her, and placed his bayonet to her breast, with horrid imprecations asking of what party she was. Every sense of recollection left the affrighted girl, who, almost unconscious of his question, muttered instinctively the word most familiar to her lips and feelings, "Royalist." He did not kill her, but seizing her by the hair, he dragged her into the château, where a small guard had been left by the victors, the great body of whom had directed their march to Nantes, while a single division was detached in pursuit of the broken and dispersed Vendéans. The officer in command of the château, hearing the charge against Jeannette, ordered her to be thrust into a hovel in the

court-yard, where a miserable remnant of the villagers were confined.

When she saw herself among these old friends of her happiest days, and now the companions of her ruin, a something like pleasure seemed to break upon her. They had, however, little to communicate but sighs, tears, and lamentations. A night was passed in this monotony of woe. They were furnished with a scanty supply of coarse food, which served but to irritate the hunger that, in spite of romance, will force its way through the deepest suffering.

At day-break they were all summoned out to the court-yard, prepared for any fate, and indifferent to all. But Death had not yet closed with his victims. They were brought forth, and having each received a portion of bread, they set off, escorted by the guard of the château, on the road to Nantes, which was, they were informed, their final destination. They proceeded silently and sullenly on. As they quitted the long-loved spot for ever, the villagers, with a simultaneous movement, turned round their

heads. They saw enough in one glance to satisfy their despair. To complete the picture of the preceding days, the château was now in flames, its relentless conquerors having resolved to leave no vestige of the village undestroyed. It was thus these warriors marched through their native land—desolation the monument of their victories, and a desert the resting-place of their renown.

As the party proceeded, the track of their precursors was easily distinguished. Ruins, havoc, and death, choked up the passage of the roads; but not one surviving wretch was found to tell the fate of his fellows. They emerged, at length, from the woody fastnesses of La Vendée, and, reaching the gently-winding Sevre, the fine varieties of nature burst, for the first time, on the prisoners, but not in beauty. Their woe-worn hearts could ill participate in the enjoyment of such scenes; and what is loveliness if sympathy responds not to its charms? How vainly may the richest view expand itself before our gaze—how ineffectual are the grandest



exhibitions of combined magnificence, if the soul is unattuned by inward preparation! We call this landscape beautiful, or that sublime—phrases of form, conventional terms agreed on between men—but through the widest range of loveliness or splendour, we find nothing with power to stamp its meaning on us if our susceptibilities are not in unison to receive the impress. Such was not the case with the unhappy outcasts whose route I am now following. To mark the various feelings of their lone and agitated minds would be a sad and difficult task. With my hapless heroine every thought was paralysed and plunged in dead indifference. For her the Loire, upon whose banks the third day brought them, flowed unobserved. The acclivities by which it is bordered, with all their scattered ornaments—castles, abbeys, villages, and hamlets—uprose around her, but in vain. The frequent vineyards, in their picturesque positions, planted on the steep rocks which hang over the water's edge, and showing often from their mass of foliage the habitation of the

vigneron hewn in the breast of the calcareous cliff—all these sweet combinations were lost upon the desolate Jeannette.

Another night, and Nantes displayed itself to view. Could any thing have awakened the sympathy of the suffering girl, it had surely been the first glance of this beautiful town: stretching its broad front along the banks of the river; its fine quay, with a double colonnade of noble trees, skirting the wide and transparent stream, on the surface of which islands of verdure fling their reflected shadows, and give to the water an apparent depth, which, however, it does not possess. But the very shallowness of this charming river is to me one of its chief beauties; and I love to look on its pebbly bed, and see, in the summer season, the scattered sand-banks rising over its rippling wave, and covered with basking groups of cattle, or sportive bands of children.

The mournful troop marched on. During their long route, the roughness of their escort seemed to be hushed by the influence of pity. The prisoners were allowed to totter on, with-

out any aggravation from insult or ill-treatment ; but as they now approached the grand depot of crime and cruelty, their conductors seemed to gain a new ferocity in the anticipation of that they went to meet. Their approach to the barriers was quickly announced through the fauxbourg, and a crowd of idle ruffians came out to pour their bitter and terrific welcomes. Jeannette was nearly dropping from exhaustion, covered with dust, and at no time of a prepossessing appearance. Her figure was singled out as the particular mark of ribaldry and sarcasm. She bore it all, however, with a forbearance not likely to be shaken, for it was founded on despair.

It was noon when she and her friends, the very refuse of wretchedness, arrived at the public square of Nantes, on their way to the prison to which they were destined. The accumulating crowd seemed to gather fury as their numbers increased ; bad passions gaining strength from association, as virtuous feeling thrives in singleness and solitude. The dissuasions and efforts of the guards could hardly



protect the poor Vendéans from the violence of the rabble. The hootings and revilings heaped on them drew additional tormentors from every street they passed; but, in justice to the humane and respectable portion of the population, it should be stated, that it was *but* the rabble who joined in this and similar persecutions. The town of Nantes may, in this instance, be fairly taken as an epitome of all France; for in the one, as well as the other, it was the dregs of society who stamped by their atrocities the character of infamy which has attached itself to both. They got the upper hand, and used it. May the terrible truth carry down its moral with it!

As the prisoners were hurried along, many a stifled sigh was given for their fate; many a silent prayer put up in their behalf, and even some remonstrances offered in their favour. But all was alike unknown by Jeannette and her companions; nor was any thing capable of arresting their attention, till, rising above the heads of the multitude, one object struck upon their sight, and for the first time broke their

lethargy. It was the guillotine! not silent, motionless, unoccupied—but at work in all the fulness of its terrors, and surrounded by the worst of revolutionary excitements.

The villagers were led in triumphant procession through every quarter of the town. As they passed along the quay, scattered parties of the populace were shouting in joyous acclamations, as some boats, filled with people of both sexes, put off from the shore. Were these the enthusiastic adieus of affection, blending with the winds to waft its objects safely over the waves? No—a desperate enjoyment was mixed with the hoarse sounds, unlike the faint farewell of tenderness and friendship. What meant the answering shrieks sent forth from every boat—the fierce struggles of frantic women and despairing men, visible to the astonished eyes of the Vendéans? Could these be the expressions of departing love tearing itself from those who had long filled the breasts of the unhappy crews? No, no; it is not thus that parting scenes are signalized; not thus that inevitable, or even sudden, separations affect

the traveller, of whom hope anticipates the return. Alas ! it was the *noyades*, whose frightful festival was now in celebration. Those bloodless butcheries, those quiet massacres, which first stole upon the victims in all the seduction of tranquillity, but which, when betrayed to their discovery, came more shocking than the direst preparations for slaughter.

The day was closing in upon these horrid scenes, when the prisoners flung themselves upon their heaps of straw in the gloomy prison called *L'Entrepôt*. Each hour which brought them nearer to their end showed them the terrible novelties of life. Dungeons and shackles, and blood and blasphemy, surrounded them. The night passed by in darkness ; but the din of agonised despair—the clank of chains—the echoing of clenched fists against the half-distracted head—the laugh of maniac fear—the wailing of the weak—the imprecations of the violent—the deep breath of the sleepers, for even *there* was sleep—the death rattle in the throats of those who thus cheated the monsters



of the morrow,—these were the combinations that filled up the creeping hours.

The grated portal was thrown open with the dawn, and the anxious guards rushed in. Their first care was to remove the bodies of the happy few who had died during the night; and these were dragged forth with indignities which fell on the sympathizing survivors, not on them! Next came the selection of the victims of the day. Many were hurried out as their names were successively called over. For the females of the lately arrived group, one chance of life remained. It was permitted to each republican soldier to choose from among the condemned one woman to be acknowledged as his wife. The same privilege existed with regard to children; and, being exercised with unbounded humanity, many an adopted infant of Royalist, and often of noble blood, has been ushered to the world; and numbers, no doubt, at this moment exist as the reputed offspring of revolutionary parents.

Upon every new arrival in the prisons, the

well-disposed of the soldiery came in to exercise this right, and a party now waited for admission.

When the previously allotted victims were drawn out for execution, this band of expectants were ushered in. They entered quickly on their scrutiny; but being actuated by humanity much more than passion, the selection was not a matter of difficulty or delay. All the women of the little group were instantly chosen forth but one. Need I name her? Who could have chosen Jeannette? It was impossible. She was looked at but to be turned from; and showing no sort of interest in her own fate, she excited the less regard from others. She finally remained behind with three or four men, for whom there was no hope. Of these, two saw their wives led forth in the possession of their respective claimants; and, dead to every feeling of their own fate, they now called for death with an eager alacrity—throwing themselves at the feet of the soldiers, embracing their knees, and calling down blessings on the preservers of

those for whom alone they ever thought of life.

One by one the prisoners disappeared, either to be sacrificed or saved. Jeannette, who lay extended in a remote and darkened corner of the room, insensible to what was passing, at length raised her head, and looking round the chamber, found that she was alone. Horrible as was her solitude, it gave her some relief. She felt free to give vent to the accumulated anguish of so many days, and she, not unwillingly, discovered that her cheeks were flooded with tears. She gave herself up to the full abandonment of her sorrow, and sobbed and sighed aloud. The centinel who paced outside the grating heard the unexpected sounds, for he thought the chamber totally untenanted. He entered, and saw the miserable figure of our heroine reclined upon her straw. Astonished at the oversight which had left her behind, he approached and gently raised her up. He asked, in soothing terms, for his heart was touched, "Why had she not been brought



out with the other prisoners?" She knew not why. "Had she no friend in Nantes?" She had no friend any where. "Did she know any republican, civil or military?" She never knew but one, and he was now dead. "What was his name?" "La Coste." "Where did he die?" "He was killed in La Vendée." "Had she any memorial of his which might be recognised by his friends?" "Yes, a black silk handkerchief"—taking it from her head, and handing it to the soldier. "Only *this*? nothing more?" "Oh! yes, some of his handwriting"—producing the scrap of scribbled paper. The soldier rejecting the first rather questionable token of identity, took the latter; uncreased, refolded, smoothed, and looked at it attentively, in hopes of its affording some clew by which to discover who was the writer. While he was thus occupied, Jeannette felt as if her existence was renewed; as if another spring had burst out in the desert of her bosom; and being instinctively impressed with the belief that she now might learn the sentiments of him whom she had so tenderly loved, she entreated the

soldier to read the manuscript aloud. But while the centinel prepared to read, the clattering of footsteps broke in upon her reverie, and the jailor, with some soldiers of the guard, quickly entered the room. With violent execrations they accused the centinel of having purposely concealed Jeannette, while he on his part retorted the reproach upon the jailor. The security of the victim was, however, the surest means of reconciliation. The dispute was soon arranged, and our heroine handed over to the accompanying guard, with directions to hurry her to the quay, where her companions waited only her arrival to proceed to *embarkation*! They seized her, and hastened her onwards, her face besmeared with a concrete of dust and tears; her clothes torn and disordered; her hair dishevelled and loose upon her shoulders, for the handkerchief which had bound it was left behind in the prison. All these concurrent disfigurements heightened her natural defects, and in this state she reached the boat. Several of the old and condemned of both sexes were already embarked, but not

one female with the least pretensions to youth was there. She was pushed over the side by the guards, and received on board by the ready executioners with a shout of mockery. The preparations being all completed, the boatmen were in the very act of pushing from the shore, when a young soldier, flushed and panting, forced his way through the crowd; plunged into the water, seized the prow of the boat, and cried out loudly, "Hold! I am not too late. I choose that girl for my wife." The object of his choice shrieked on seeing him, and as he held forth his arms to receive her, she sunk fainting on the floor. The guards, the prisoners, the lookers on, were all for a moment mute. The scene was so quick, and the choice so inexplicable, that no time was given for comment, conjecture, or opposition. A moment more and the boat pushed off—but lightened of its wretched freight, for the insensible Jeanette was borne triumphantly to land, in the nervous arms of the grateful and generous La Coste.

I must not now linger on my narrative, the



interest of which I know to be nearly over. Little remains to be told, and that little shall be shortly despatched. La Coste hastened to explain to his astonished Jeannette, who soon recovered her senses, on his bosom, that on the morning after their parting, he had succeeded in safely making his way to the outposts of the republican army, where he arrived just as the battle began; that he had escaped unhurt during the whole of that dreadful day; that at the close of the fight, when victory was no longer doubtful, the division to which his regiment belonged was ordered off to Nantes by a route different from the village; and that in the moment of his departure, finding the impossibility of making his way to the cottage, whose half consumed ruins he saw smoking from the heights, he had intrusted to a chosen comrade the task of seeking it, of relating his safety to Jeannette, if she still lived, and of delivering her the purse which might have been so useful.

I must not attempt to describe the sensations of our heroine on hearing this wondrous recital; nor the grief of La Coste on learning the fate

of his friend. He went on, however, to state that, arrived at Nantes, he had been too particularly occupied to know of the approach of the poor remnant of the villagers, whom report had stated to have every soul perished in the sack and conflagration of their homes, but that he had heard within a few minutes of her adventure, and ascertained her identity, in a chance conversation with the sentry of the prison, a man wholly unknown to him, who was relating the circumstances to a group of his fellow soldiers. He said that he had but one line of action to pursue. He promptly followed it—and she was now his nominal wife.

He kept the girl with him under this title for three months, but no ceremony had made them one. He treated her, however, with a tenderness and respect more than is to be found in many a legitimate union; but Jeannette clearly perceived that gratitude was the only spring which actuated his bosom with regard to her. She had never hoped for more, nor reckoned on so much; yet satisfied and even happy, she had some moments of alarm when

she reflected that stronger feelings might sometime or other break the ties which thus bound them together. Her apprehensions, and the strength of his attachment, were soon put to the test, for invasion just then advanced on every side; and his regiment, among others, was ordered to the frontiers at a notice of one day. Jeannette, feeling that she had no further claim upon him; that he had overpaid the service she had rendered him; and that such a wife as she was could be but an encumbrance to such a man as he;—told him frankly, that miserable as it would make her, she wished him to consider himself perfectly free; and that being now able to work her own way in the world, she hoped that no delicacy to her would make him risk the ruin of his own prospects in life. La Coste *was* delicately and difficultly placed. I have said that he was handsome and pleasing. His figure and his manners were, in those days of equality, a certain passport to the best—that was the richest—society in Nantes. He was very generally admired, and had been particularly distinguished by the daughter of a



wealthy and violent republican. She was beautiful and accomplished. She had solicited his attentions, and he had even a regard for her person. Had he married her, he was certain of both rank and riches;—but if he did so, what was to become of Jeannette? He summed up in one of those mental moments, which can grasp at a glance such multitudes of calculations, the manifold advantages of such a match.—He then turned towards Jeannette, and though I cannot say that looking on her face made him “forget them all,” I may safely assert, that picturing to himself her forlorn and desolate perspective, he felt some spell strong enough to make him renounce the mighty temptations to abandon her.—The struggle was short, for he married her on the moment, and the next morning they marched off together for the seat of war.—How many ready mouths will exclaim, “He only did his duty!” Would that such duties were more commonly performed!

For twenty-one years La Coste served as a

private soldier. He was brave and well conducted, but he had not the good fortune of promotion. For this entire period Jeannette was his faithful and affectionate wife. She earned, by her industry, sufficient to add some scanty comforts to his barrack-room or his tent. Through Germany, Italy, and Spain, she attended him in many a bloody campaign, and stood unflinching by his side in many an hour of peril and distress; and at length, after all, watched by his death-bed in his native town when peace gave him time to die. They had one daughter, beautiful and good. She, too, married a soldier, who was discharged when war became out of fashion; and following his trade of gardening, he now supports with comfort his wife and five children, and gives refuge to his mother-in-law, whose declining years do not prevent her from usefully exerting her talents as a washerwoman.

I have seen the whole group in a cottage, which I thought happier than some homes of prouder dimensions; or sporting in their garden,

which is as fragrant and flourishing as others surrounding less enviable, though more refined, societies. Jeannette, or, if the reader should prefer the title, Madame La Coste, has not lost her appellation of *La vilaine tête*, and, perhaps, her claim to it is somewhat strengthened by the ravages and wrinkles of increasing age, and the deep bronzing of the southern sun. This tale was given from her own recital, and most likely the reader requires not to be told that my old washerwoman, of the village in Medoc, was herself the identical heroine. If I have sometimes enlarged on the details, or substituted my own language for that of the narrator, I have probably done mischief, when I thought I was embellishing. The effect produced on me was, perhaps, too overrated in my estimate of its possible power on others—while sitting before me in my inn bed-room, my old and ugly washerwoman broke suddenly off from counting my linen to the subject of her own eventful story; and carelessly lolling on her chair, commenced, with the naïveté of a peasant, and in the untranslatable idiom of



La Vendée, to tell her simple tale ; interrupted often by sighs for her husband, her grandmother, and her native village, whose name now hardly exists but in her memory.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

HIGH-WAYS AND BY-WAYS;  
OR  
TALES OF THE ROADSIDE,

PICKED UP IN THE FRENCH PROVINCES.

BY  
A WALKING GENTLEMAN.

---

“ I hate the man who can travel from Dan to Beersheba, and  
say 'Tis all barren !” *Sterne.*

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SECOND EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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LONDON :  
PRINTED FOR G. AND W. B. WHITTAKER,  
AVE-MARIA-LANE.

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1823.





THE  
BIRTH OF HENRY IV.

---

“L'Enfant vint au monde, sans crier ni pleurer.”  
DE PEREFIXE.



THE  
BIRTH OF HENRY IV.

---

THERE is not in nature a finer spectacle than a distant chain of mountains covered with snow, and glistening in the sun. It is impossible to describe this appearance, nor is it easy to define the sensations it produces in the mind. The object has in it something loftier than beauty, and possesses a softened sublimity totally unassociated with fear. Unlike other vast works of nature, it does not speak to our apprehensions, nor does it, like those of art, bring humiliating notions of imperfection and decay : but stretching far away along the horizon, in celestial splendour of colouring, it looks like the boundary of the world, and might be believed a fitting resting-place between earth and heaven.

Such were my reflections when I first discovered the Pyrenees, at about thirty leagues



distance, from the rising grounds near the town of Villeneuve de Marsan. I shall never forget that moment. My delight was of a kind to be felt but once in life, but which stamped an impression, vivid in proportion to its suddenness, and more lasting than that produced by years of calm and regulated enjoyment. In gazing on the golden transparency which the mountains seemed to present, I fancied myself transported to some scene of fairy-land, and doubted for a while their existence. They looked more like the cloud-formed imagery of the skies, and I many a time regretted, as I approached them, the illusion which their solid reality put to flight.

Every league which brought me nearer lessened the enchantment, but added to the romance of the scene. The visionary and fairy-like aspect gradually dissolved, as the charms of nature were growing into life, and as the actual beauties of existence appeared to force their way through the veil of radiance by which they had been covered. Step by step, the mountains rose into height and majesty. Dark green masses became evident, instead of the glittering heaps of snow

which I had seen at first. Woods, rocks, and streams, made themselves next distinguished, in all their variety of shade and form ; and in three days, from that on which these magnificent hills were first visible to me, I reposed at their base, impressed with the fullest sense of their mightiness and my own insignificance.

It is not for me to describe the beauties of these mountains. Volumes have been poured forth on the subject, and will be succeeded by volumes, as long as the noblest scenes of nature can excite admiration, or until some miracle robs men of their desire to tell what they have seen, and express what they feel. Those scenes are certainly the region for composition. Wandering in their wild and exquisite paths, carried beyond the world's realities, absorbed in contemplation, and given up to the abandonment of fancy, the mind willingly indulges its overflowings, and cares not whether they take the form of poetry or prose. Indeed the productions of such moments must partake of the nature of both ; and it was in one of those silent, sequestered, castle-building moods, that the following

lines forced themselves into uncalled-for utterance :

These are the scenes where nature strews  
Our way with wonders ;—where we lose  
Thought's measured march for countless hours ;  
When stretch'd beneath embranching bowers,  
Deep in the lap of some soft vale,  
Our languid minds its sweets inhale ;  
Or wandering on some streamlet's brink,  
We love to stop—to gaze—to think !  
Then Fancy peoples the broad glades  
With groups of early friendship's shades—  
Changes the greenwood's sloping dell  
'To life's young play-scenes loved so well—  
Hears in the far sequester'd spot  
Sounds hush'd, but ne'er to be forgot—  
Clothes nature in a robe more bright—  
Fills heaven with youth's empurpled light—  
Casts o'er the coarse weeds' drooping fringe  
A shapelier grace, and lovelier tinge—  
While memory bends, as prone to lave  
Its feverish flushings in the wave.

But the quick mind, with forward rush,  
Bold as the mountain-torrent's gush,  
Springs from the thoughts of former years,  
From faded hopes, from fruitless tears,  
And bounding onwards, far and free,  
Deserts dull fact for joys to be.  
Then leap to life, in fairy train,  
Those fond illusions of the brain ;



Those shadowy structures that we raise  
To hoard the bliss of unborn days !  
Those lights from hope's ethereal beam,  
Which sparkling through each treacherous dream,  
Seem the false fabrics to enfold,  
Like clouds by sunbeams bathed in gold.  
·Lightly the floating fictions rise,  
As desert cheateries on the skies,  
Till shatter'd by some thought of care,  
The loosen'd fragments melt in air ;  
And worldly waters back reflect  
The visionary architect !

And there are heaven-revealing times  
Which reason's radiant flame sublimes ;  
When nobler views the heart inspire,  
And faith lights high her beacon fire,  
The clay-clogg'd powers of thought to guide  
Across the waves of passions tide.  
Moments, when earth's rude hum is still,  
And higher raptures lead the will ;  
When on the topmost mountain's breast  
We lay our length, and all is rest :  
Deep, deep beneath the plains are spread—  
But motion slumbering seems, or dead.  
To our far gaze the world below  
Stands fix'd and silent : even the flow  
Of the live rivers seems to cease,  
And the eye marks their winding trace  
But as a line of liquid light,  
Noiseless, and motionless, and bright.

A soothing softness gathers round :

The wind sleeps stilly on its couch  
Of fragrant wild-flowers ; while no sound

The drowsy senses comes to touch,  
Nor wakes the seraph calm that steals  
Across the soul, whose trance reveals  
Scenes of high heaven, no longer hid  
From the full eye—each half-closed lid  
Shuts out all earth ; and only sees

On the broad ocean of the air,  
Slow sailing onwards, though no breeze

Is felt which could have borne them there,  
A tide of white, self-wafted clouds  
Come rolling on like snow-wreathed floods,  
And round the summit of the peak  
In shatter'd splendour softly break.

But soon the fleecy fragments join'd,  
Float on their course, yet leave behind  
One lovely, vapoury shade, that seems

To hover lingering slowly nigh,  
As if upheld by those bright beams,

Whose radiance lights it through the sky ;  
And o'er its breast such colouring flings  
As fancy gives to angels' wings.

Oh ! who such shadowy couch could mark,  
Nor wish, nor hope life's deathless spark  
In disembodied splendour spread,  
Like light on this ærial bed ;

And borne, beyond the beams of day,  
On ray-form'd pinions far away  
To the pure realms, for which we sigh  
In pride of immortality !

But in all the varieties of the Pyrenees, their pics, valleys, rivers, and grottos, there is no part which conveys such a combination of rational delights as the ancient province of Bearn, the country of Henry IV. Natural beauties are every where scattered with a hand at once so liberal and just, that it is hard to particularize the parts most deserving of notice. Bearn has its ample share of loveliness and grandeur ; but in point of moral charms, none of the others can bear comparison with it.

The inhabitants of this district, viewed in whatever point we will, are one of the finest and most interesting people of the earth. Whether looked at in their physical aspect, as the best formed, the handsomest, and most active race existing ; or in their national character, as uniting nobility of feeling with true politeness, hospitality with temperance, and courage with humanity, they command our admiration and regard. Considered with respect to their history, they merit a deeper attention, for they are perhaps the people who present the most perfect example of an indigenous and uncorrupted race, preserving



its language, its customs, and its character, as they existed in the most remote antiquity.

From the period of the decline of the Roman empire, the confusion of races among the inhabitants of the Pyrenees was extreme. Mixed already with the Romans, they were so afterwards with the Alani, Suevi, Goths, and Franks; and, in some degree, with the Saracens during their excursions into France. In fact, but this one portion of the people preserved themselves pure in the midst of confusion, ravage, and defeat. This people, called by Roman writers *Vaccées* and *Vascons*, appear to have belonged to the country between the Pyrenees and the sources of the Ebro. Unknown to the Phœnicians and Carthaginians, who never crossed this river, and avoiding Roman subjugation in the refuge afforded them by their mountain fastnesses, they were able to resist successively the Visigoths and Moors. Finally possessing themselves of the country of the two Navarres, they penetrated early into Bearn; subjected for a while a part of the people of Aquitaine (who took from them the name of Gascons), and their posterity exist

this day in the persons of the Basques, and perhaps of the Biscayans, who claim a like origin.

While this extraordinary and ancient people remained thus unaltered, all around them was changed. The vivacity of the Gaul and the Iberian was modified more or less by Roman gravity and barbarian grossness. The inhabitants of Upper Aragon, Catalonia, and Bigorre, all, indeed, from the centre of the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean, showed no longer their primitive characters, a distinction destined for the people alone of whom I am now treating\*.

Such was the race of whom Henry IV. was one; among whom he was born and brought up; and of whom his person and his character formed a distinguished and striking illustration. To such an origin and such a training he owed those fine qualities, inherited from his ancestors, and fostered by his people; and their obligations were reciprocal,—for to him alone are they indebted for their chief celebrity in modern times. The days being long since gone by when, ruled

\* On this subject see Ramond's *Observations sur les Pyrénées*.

by their independent sovereigns, they made themselves remarkable either by their manner of choosing a king \*, or by their conduct under his sway, the people of Bearn would have shared the common lot of other nations amalgamated and confused with their conquerors, had not the brilliant qualities of Henry stamped them with a proud distinction. As it is, they stand out as it were before us in an attitude of commanding and irresistible interest, and every individual forms a fine epitome of the dignified simplicity of his nation.

My readers may imagine with what pleasure I ranged these mountains and valleys, peopled by such a race, and consecrated by such remembrances. Abandoning the beaten track of common-place intercourse, it was ever my habit

\* In 1173, wishing a master of the blood of their last sovereign, they sent a deputation to his sister to ask for one of her twin children. The request being granted, they had their choice. The infants both slept at the moment. One had his hands closed, the other had his open. The deputies saw in the latter attitude the sign of a noble and generous character. They chose him, and this monarch in his after-age acquired the title of Gaston *The Good*.



to throw myself into the by-roads of the hills ; where, shut up, and in part identified with this isolated region, I breathed the very spirit of the people, and of the feelings by which they were guided and governed. It was in these rambles that I acquired a thorough esteem for these hardy mountaineers, and an enthusiastic attachment to the scenes they inhabit. My affection for them and their country was considerably strengthened from that sympathy excited throughout by the memory of the hero so worthy of his country and his people ; whose reign was the real epoch of French glory, and whose name is a rallying word for every thought ennobling to humanity. But it was in an aspect less exalted, but full as remarkable, that he was now before me. As I wound through the passes of the hills, tracked the winding rivulets, or climbed the rugged rocks, Henry seemed always present to my view, as in his boyhood he scrambled over these mountain scenes, dressed like the peasant children, his feet unshod, and his head exposed to the sun and the wind \*.

\* Le grand-pere ne voulut pas qu'on le nourrist avec

The Biddissoa was in my rear, Spain in my recollection, and Bayonne in sight, when I turned from the high route between that town and Pau, and struck into one of the gorges leading to the depths of these mountain solitudes. Nature was fresh and fragrant. The sun was bright. The branches of the young pines, and the mountain ash, moved gaily in the breeze, and the rivulets, gushing from the hills, danced down their sides, over beds of verdure which burst out in a profusion of richest vegetation.

I was so exhilarated and buoyant that, contrary to my usual wont, I walked remarkably fast, so much so as to keep Ranger at a regular dog trot. My thoughts were proportionately active, and ran on in that wild and curbless way, so frequently consequent on good health, good

la delicatessen qu'on nourrit d'ordinaire les gens de cette qualité, mais il ordonna qu'on l'habillast et qu'on le nourrist comme les autres enfans du païs ; et mesme qu'on l'accoustumast à courir et à monter sur les rochers. On dit que pour l'ordinaire on le nourrissoit de pain bis, de bœuf, de fromage, et d'ail ; et que bien souvent on le faisoit marcher nuds pieds et nuë teste.—DE PEREFIXE *Histoire du Roy Henry le Grand*, Q. 1, p. 18, 19, 16mo. *Elzevir*, Ed. 1661.

spirits, and mountain air. “Come on, Ranger!” cried I, “never fear! our wanderings *must* have a term, and who knows how soon? Yes, yes, there is something yet in store for us. For me a snug cottage, a nice stock of books, good shooting, and a bottle of wine for a friend.—For you, the chimney corner and a cushion.—Come along, Ranger; come along!”

A responsive wag of the tail acknowledged the cheering address; and a joyous roll on a tufted bed of wild thyme, followed by some indescribable capers and curvettings, announced his sympathy with my ambitious hopes.

I never could reckon leagues, nor remember time correctly; and on the morning I now describe was less than ever adapted to aught mathematical. I was in that mood of utter abandonment, and loss of self, which was never new to poets since Horace, nor before him;—when we “think down hours to moments,” and slide over space unheedful of its measurement. I am thus unable to say how far or how long I had journeyed, when descending rapidly the mountain path, which was skirted with flowers, and fringed by



two little streamlets running down the precipitous banks, I was stopped suddenly by a peal of laughter of enjoyment's finest and clearest tone. I was in tune for this cheerful note, and paused for its repetition. It came on my ear again and again—manly, honest, and hearty, and at length died away in jovial echoings, till nothing was heard but the chuckle of some staunch votary of fun, who never got farther, most certainly, than the mouth of Trophonius's cave.

The sounds were close to me, yet I saw no one; and I thought of the stories of Brownies, Kelpies, and other supernatural beings, of whose joyous revels I had many times heard from the peasants of the Scotch highlands. I moved onwards, however, concluding that a harmless and cheerful traveller had nothing to fear from mortal or other company, with whom he was so much in unison.

As I trudged along, I heard an occasional voice which always seemed to utter a shout of gladness and triumph. This was accompanied by sounds, at irregular intervals, as if some hard substance was struck by another, for they

rung echoing through the valley below me to the left.

The sounds became suddenly fainter as I got to a hollow part in the road; and I had almost lost them totally, when a quick turning in the path brought me round a projecting rock, and displayed to me, on the acclivity at the opposite side of a beautiful glen, the secret of these mountain mysteries.

Hanging on the slope of the hill was a village of most romantic appearance. The ten or a dozen neat cottages which composed it were built, with little space between each, in the form of a semi-circle; by this means affording to all the inhabitants an ample view of that noble and manly game, which forms the pride and pastime of the Basques. A group of the village youths was placed on the green in the full exercise of their sport. They were eight in number, fine, athletic, handsome fellows, from fifteen years old to twenty-five perhaps, dressed in the smart costume of the country. One or two wore light cotton jackets, the rest were in their shirts; some were bare-headed, others with round flat caps, having a

tassel of red worsted at the top, and all with short breeches, tied at the knees with red or blue knots, blue stockings, sandals laced to the ankle and a scarf of scarlet cotton, tied sash-ways tightly round the waist. On each right hand was a glove of thick leather, which struck with incredible force and velocity the hard ball, that seemed to carry death in its whizzing course. Not being initiated in the game, I leave its various details to the imagination of my readers, but I may safely say, that in no match of English cricket, Scotch goff, or Irish hurling (and many a one of each have I seen and joined in), did I ever witness such agility, skill, and elegance of attitude, as in this party of *jeu de paume*.

On the benches were four or five old men, with about as many women, delighted spectators of the scene, and glad echoes of the bursts of joy which followed each superiorly successful effort. Some younger females were occupied in various ways about the houses, while two or three were washing at the rivulet below. One stepped upwards towards home, with a pitcher on her head, a white scarf thrown fancifully over her neck,



and tied with a bunch of blue ribbons, and her petticoats sufficiently short to show a pair of exquisite legs, to which every part of her form was suitable. The loveliest nymph of Greece, or even those goddesses whose imagined symmetry might have dipped the pencil of Apelles in his brightest tints, or shaped and polished the marble of Praxiteles, would not, I am convinced, have borne away the palm in a competition of grace and beauty with this rustic maid.

While my attention was taken from the sport of the young men, and fixed upon this still more attractive object, *her* eye seemed riveted on the group, or some one member of it, which mine had rejected; and so intently did she gaze on the progress of the game, that she forgot her own, and, her foot catching in a bramble, she stumbled and fell. A slight scream broke from her companions at the river, who saw the accident. An old couple, who had watched her with affectionate looks as she came up, hobbled towards her. The game was in an instant abandoned. The players ran to the spot; but I remarked that one of them, whose station had been at the other extremity

of the ground, overtook the whole party before they reached the prostrate beauty. It was the affair altogether of a couple of minutes. She was unable to rise higher than her knees; not that she was in the least hurt, but her scarf had got most awkwardly entangled in the briers which had tripped her foot, and during her endeavours to extricate herself, the whole population of the village had thronged round her. Every one offered assistance; but I observed that she repulsed all the hands stretched out to relieve her, with a sort of blushing and bashful peevishness at her situation, until she discovered the identical youth who had outstripped his companions, but was now confounded with them. She gave him a smile peculiarly gracious; and he had the honour of helping her on her feet, and replacing her pitcher, which lost its contents, but was not even cracked in the fall.

The scene ended gaily and good humouredly. Many a joke, was, no doubt, bandied at the expense of the maiden, who darted once more down the winding path to refill the vessel; while her young squire sprang after her, probably to keep

her eyes steady when she next descended. The old couple returned to their seat, their countenances showing that little agitation which *grandfatherly* and *grandmotherly* faces generally display on such harmless accidents.

The whole party were resuming their places, when I caught the general attention, in the advanced position to which I had involuntarily sprung, and where I now stood, my feet crossed, and my hands supported by the muzzle of my gun. When I saw that I was observed, I took off my hat and made a low obeisance. It was unanimously returned; and on my showing an inclination to descend to the stream, in a direct line from the place where I stood, several hands were waved, and three or four voices addressed me together. I did not understand a word that was spoken, but the purport was evident; for the stream was broadest in that particular spot, and a little plank was thrown across it, about fifty yards higher up, and to which the villagers pointed. But it was one of my moments of weakness and vanity; and, wishing to give a proof of my activity to these muscular and agile peasants,



I ran down the slope, my gun in my hand, determined to leap the stream. It was tolerably wide, but not within a third of the breadth which I was confident in my ability to cross at a running jump; but, as if to punish my vain-gloriousness, my foot slipped as I made the bound, and I came with my breast against the opposite bank, and up to my knees in water. It was vexatious as well as laughable, and I suppose there was a frown mixed with the smile which I could not repress as I scrambled up the side. All the young men ran to my assistance; the old people rose from their seats; the girls ceased their washing; but I did not see any smile reflected on a single face. - One of the girls, indeed, who had laughed the heartiest at the fall of her young companion a few minutes before, turned her back towards me. I fancy she was forced to give way to her merry feelings at my ludicrous mishap, but she had the true-born politeness to keep their expression from my view.

I was soon on my legs, and was hurried to the nearest cottage, where a chair was placed for me before the kitchen fire. I here formed a centre

of attraction (if not of gravity) for the inhabitants of the village, who came, of all ages, to gratify their curiosity at the novel sight of a stranger. It was well for me that I had few personal secrets to conceal from these good people, for I became an object of the most minute and indefatigable scrutiny. A custom-house officer, a fox-hound in cover, or a ferret in a rabbit warren, could not have made a keener search in their respective pursuits than did the little black-haired urchins, from eight years downwards, in my knapsack, my game-bag, and my pockets. I know not what they looked for, if not the mere gratification of curiosity, for they certainly took nothing. The young men examined my gun, shot-pouch, and powder-horn, with critical attention; and the old fathers of the hamlet eyed me with a gaze worthy of craniological acumen and observation.

Fortunately for me, two or three of the party understood and spoke French. Among them was a young fellow, who, in resuming the costume of his native district, had not entirely thrown aside some of the distinguishing marks

of military service. He wore mustachios, and a black stock, and looked stiff-necked and formal in comparison with his elastic and loose-limbed companions. His manners, too, had something of ostentation and parade, and he seemed inclined to lord it over the others. He pushed himself forward in his civilities, and would have drilled his comrades into a more distant demeanor than was natural to them, or pleasing to me. He had not, however, any thing actually disagreeable in him; and had I met him in any other circle than among the children of nature, of whom he once was one, I should have probably singled him out as a soldier, but a little spoiled by the foppery and pomp of his profession.

Among the objects of wonder discovered in my knapsack (when, searching for a pair of stockings, I first opened it to the admiring gaze of the observers), two seemed to attract particular regard, viz. a pocket map of France, and an eleven-keyed flute. The first was greedily gazed on by an old man, whose keen quick eye seemed meant by nature for the study of the rule



and square; and had I but the requisite knowledge of the science of sciences, I think I should have found the algebraical bump particularly prominent on, what appeared to me, his smooth round pate. He was evidently much pleased, and not a little puzzled, by the mathematical mysteries displayed before him. His eye asked for information, but he could not make himself understood. He was forced to apply to the young soldier, who acted as interpreter, and by this medium I explained the purposes of those mystic lines, over which the old peasant had been pondering.

He was delighted when I pointed out Pau, and the windings of the Gave, on the banks of one of whose tributary streamlets we were then making our harmless partition of districts and provinces. But the parallels of latitude were quite beyond his powers; and I was not a little amused at the air of importance and learned research with which he announced his conjecture, that they were meant to designate the course of rivers; heedless, like many a profound theorist, whether they flowed up or down hill—over or

under mountains—or had their sources in the sea, or out of it.

As for the flute, it excited an admiration as boundless as it was general. Nothing like it had ever found its way into these remote parts. The slender reed of the mountain-shepherd, or the simple fife of the village musician, had no claims to those gorgeous and embarrassing distinctions which rifle the pockets of fools, puzzle their fingers, and falsify their instrument. In short, the monstrous improvements of a late immortal projector had probably never penetrated to the vale of Oleron, had not my knapsack been furnished identically as it was. I was determined, however, to make the best of a bad bargain; and when, yielding to the solicitations of the lads, and the wistful looks of the lasses around me, I took up the flute, to prove the possibility of using it, I made a clatter among the keys (clumsily enough had I chosen to confess it), which fixed my reputation as firmly as the principles of the music I so marred. I received in acknowledgment an ample dose of that silent applause so palatable and easy of digestion; and

luckily for me, there was no Plato of the party, to ask what I meant by the noise made.

All this while the good woman to whom the cottage belonged was preparing for me a truly pastoral meal. Eggs, milk, honey, butter, and bread, were placed before me, all perfectly delicious in quality, and in such proportions as are fitting for mountain appetites.

As the table filled, the room emptied; and the delicacy of my rustic circle in thus retiring, caused me full as much pleasure, I warrant it, as they had experienced from the most extravagant exhibition of my musical skill. My kind entertainer appeared to enjoy high respect among the villagers. She spoke French well, and had a smattering of Spanish. I had no time to inquire the particulars of a history which, from her erudition, intelligence, and good manners, promised something above her station. I only learned that, in her youth, she had lived at Bayonne, where her father had been employed in the customs, and where she acquired her knowledge; and that on his losing his situation and his head, during the troubles of the Revolution,



she had retired to the protection afforded by the honest Basques, and their obscure village.

Having told me so much, she left me to the discussion of my exquisite repast. While I ate and cogitated, I heard a confused murmur, like the humming of a mighty swarm of bees; and in that kind of restless curiosity which often breaks in on our most important moments, I looked out of the window into the little garden, and on the lawn, to discover whence the sound proceeded. But it became fainter as I approached the open air. I was fain to sit down again unsatisfied, but the buzz continued; and, determined to explore the whole apartment, I opened a couple of little closets, a clothes-press, and a saltbox, without any result but disappointment. I next groped round the walls, and one side of the room being formed by a wooden partition papered over, I clapped my ear close to it, and found myself on the high road to information. The sounds were louder and more distinct; so feeling for a chink between the planks of the partition, I pierced a little hole through the paper with the screw attached to my pocket

knife, and applying my eye to it, I perceived about a dozen of the peasant children seated on a form, and conning over their lessons; while placed before a little rickety desk, in an old oak arm-chair, was my hostess, in all the tempered majesty of a village schoolmistress.

The temple was homely, the priestess plain, and the votaries of little worth; but knowledge was the goddess they invoked! That was sufficient for me; and I protest, that the most dazzling display of academical pomp never inspired me with a deeper devotion for learning than I was filled with on beholding this humble tribute to its value.

Being refreshed and satisfied, I prepared to set out; but my proceedings being carefully observed by the young people on the green, they no sooner saw that I had finished my meal than they advanced towards me in a body. While I had been eating they had all prepared themselves for dancing, and they now came gaily forwards to request my performance on the flute. That being easily accorded, I took my station in front of the house, on a bench overhung by vines

and honeysuckles. The dancers were soon in their places, and the opera never showed a display of more *natural* agility and taste. Flowers and ribbons had been hastily twined in the hair of the females. They all, to use an Irish phrase, “handled their feet” with uncommon grace, and the whole group was a fine specimen of the living picturesque. Two of the girls had castanets, the use of which they had learned from some straggling Spaniards who had tarried awhile in the village. Two of the young men carried those little tambourins which form a constant accompaniment to the dances of the Basques; and I, discarding the use of a good two-thirds of my eleven keys, contrived to play, in tolerable time and tune, some of those sweet country dances in which the French do positively excel all nations.

The dance being ended, I fairly began to take leave. I shook hands with every one around me; and the reader may believe me, that when I relinquished the grasp of my erudite hostess, she blushed a deep blush of offended pride on finding a piece of money in her palm. She did



not speak a word, but stepping briskly up to me as I turned round, she replaced it in my hand, and there was in her manner a modest determination which utterly forbid a renewal of the affront.

My old mathematician was sitting under a lime-tree musing on the map. He stood up, and offered it to me with a look as if he had been parting from a dear friend. I put it between his hands as I cordially shook them, and in a way to mark that such was its final destination. He looked quite surprised and happy; placed one hand on his heart, and with the other took off his cap, and swept it down to the grass. I wished to say "good bye" to the soldier, but I saw that he skulked round a clump of acacias, and evidently avoided me.

I asked the schoolmistress if she knew the cause of this caprice. "Alas! my dear sir," said she, "you know not the wound you have unconsciously given to the vanity of the poor fellow. He is the musician, *par excellence*, of the whole village; but the shrill tones of his fife

are, I fear, for ever hushed. Nothing, I think, could console him for this day's disgrace."

No, no, said I to myself, after a moment's pause, it is impossible. By Jove, I cannot, will not, be always a fool! To buy it was bad enough, but to give it away in this manner would be worse. "My good hostess, I am indeed sorry that my gaudy instrument should have put the poor lad out of conceit with his more simple, but, no doubt, sweeter one. Tell him so for me, and that I hope he will soon change his key, and discard all discord from his feelings. To you I should be glad to give some little proof of my esteem. Do take this little edition of Massillon's *Petit Carême*: I have carried it in my pocket for some leagues, and it has helped to shorten many of them. It is not of value enough to be refused, and only worth acceptance for the excellence of the matter, and the good will of the donor."

"I take it with pleasure, and thankfully," replied she; "and the only thing I can offer you in return is this scrap of a pamphlet, which, as

relating to our country, may interest you for half an hour."

I took her present, and glancing my eye on the title, found it to be, in French, "The Birth of Henry IV." I rolled it up and put it carefully in my pocket to be read at my leisure.

Several handkerchiefs and *berrets* were waved after me as I wound down the hill, followed by Ranger, whose round paunch and sober pace did honour to the hospitality of the village. The last thing I saw of these unsophisticated people was the lovely girl, whose fall I have recounted, walking slowly in a shady path with her lover—for I would lay a good round wager that he was her lover, ay, and her favoured lover too.

As I passed them, they both, by signs and looks, wished me a pleasant walk—a compliment which I thought it quite unnecessary to return. My eyes said something to them in reply, however, which was answered on the part of the nymph

With a smile that glow'd  
Celestial rosy red, love's proper hue ;

and by the lover with a look of self-content,



which seemed to say that he agreed with me perfectly.

The echoing sounds of the ball, which once more came upon my ear, told me that the much-loved game was again in full play. I believe I had one passing thought of something like chagrin, to think that my departure had left so slight an impression on the villagers. But this was quickly replaced by the consoling fancy that they had recourse to their sports to banish their regrets; and one self-sufficient notion followed another, as fast as vanity could string them together, or folly give them utterance. It is, however, certain that I hurried my pace at a marvellous rate, to the great discomfiture of Ranger's digestion; and any ill-natured reader may account for my speed, by supposing that I feared to encounter a new burst of jollity, which might have thrown me back into the sad belief that I was no longer thought of.

I walked in a beautiful valley. A clear stream, as is usual in these mountain hollows, ran in the middle, and the hilly banks were covered with woods. A few straggling cottages, like outliers

from the village herd, were perched in little nooks upon the heights, and the dark green of the vegetable garden, attached to each, formed a rich contrast to the yellow corn fields and bright meadows which surrounded them. The variety of position in these lofty regions makes a variety of climates within a small compass. In some of the exposed and open places the harvest was far advanced. In others, more sheltered from the sun, it was just begun. The upland meadows were in some parts mowed: in others, the crop of after grass was springing, under the influence of continual irrigation from a dozen everflowing streams. The low grounds near the rivulet were now yielding their treasures to the labour of the mower, and in one spot, where I stopped to gaze on the lovely scenery, I heard the flail, the scythe, and the sickle joined in a harmony of rural sounds.

Just there the confluence of several streamlets from the hills had formed a basin of water, which worked out a considerable excavation in the banks. The earth was quite washed away from the base of a large rock at the side where I walked,

and my path was abruptly terminated on the pebbly edge of the little lake. To have climbed the rock, by means of the creeping shrubs which covered it, would have been very difficult if not dangerous, and no one being in sight to stimulate my love of fame, I did not attempt it. Besides, I considered that if I even got to the top, I might have to descend again in search of an outlet. Something told me, too, that I was not the first who had arrived at the termination of the little road; and I thought the chances were against its having been made for the mere purpose of leading people into a scrape. I therefore determined to call for help, hoping, at least, that the genius of the stream would deign to come to my aid. I loudly hallooed "Boat! boat!" and my call was not long unnoticed. Close to where I stood, and almost touching the rock which projected over the water, a little pointed prow came suddenly towards me; and as the full length of the boat came in view, it swung up to the beach, by the management of a rope and pulley attached to the rock, but which escaped my previous observation. No living thing appeared, but I did



not hesitate to accept the courteous but silent offer of a passage, and, stepping gallantly over the side, I put myself under the protection of all the nymphs and naiades that ever ruled or sported in these waters.

As soon as I was embarked, the little canoe swung round again, and was pulled by some invisible hand round the rock, to a romantic little cove about ten yards at the other side. Still there was no one to be seen. This looked certainly very like enchantment—but it was no enchantment after all. For while I stood with one foot on the gunnel and another on shore, looking my inquiries from hill and dale, a hoarse gruff voice called out, “Here ! this way !” I followed the direction of the ungracious tones ; and, at half a dozen paces from me, observed a kind of grotto, or hut, or hovel, which was a puzzling mixture of the architecture of beautiful nature and rude art. Wishing to describe it by an epithet clear and concise, I shall call it the rustic-composite ; and I shall be happy to show to any of my curious readers a copy from this

model whenever it pleases the Fates to allow me to

Call one spot of all the world my own.

Peeping out from a little loop-hole in this resting-place was a rough-looking personage, of an aspect such as Charon might have shown had he been a toll-gatherer instead of a ferryman. Having no strongly developed taste for mechanics, I did not feel any desire to examine the contrivance by which he brought his boat to harbour and then sent her out again for a new freight ; and not finding any thing inviting in his physiognomy or address, I paid him his *sous*, and made my way up the path which ascended a tolerably high hill. I meant to indulge myself, when I should reach the top, with a view of the country, and a perusal of the schoolmistress's pamphlet ; but a new rencontre retarded for a little the gratification of my curiosity, and the reader cannot grumble if he shares the same fate.

As I prepared to ascend, my eye was caught by a figure descending rapidly towards me. It

was that of a man, tall, stout, and vigorous. A broad-leafed hat covered his head. He wore a blue tight cotton vest, small-clothes of the same, with large ties of red tape. His legs were bare ; and sandals of undressed cow hide, the hair inward, were tied round his ankles with thongs of leather. In a broad belt buckled round his waist were attached a small hatchet, for clearing his passage through the glaciers, and a pair of iron-spiked shoes, without which it is impossible to traverse the snowy regions at the summit of the mountains. Across his shoulders was flung a short carbine, and in his hand he bore a staff spiked at one end, to aid his ascent in the passes of ice then glittering far above us.

The moment he perceived me, he stopped short, sprung half behind a large stone ; and in an instant his carbine was cocked, and his eye fixed fiercely on me. "Friend or foe?" asked he in Spanish, and in a tone which sounded like a positive declaration of war.

"I am a traveller," replied I, "and a foe to no honest man." He looked at me a moment sternly, but not so fiercely as at first ; and seeing



nothing hostile in my attitude or manner, he stepped towards me, his carbine in his hand, ready for action if required, and taking care to keep the advantage of the high ground. As he approached, I rested the but-end of my gun upon the ground, and waited his address. "If I am not mistaken, sir," said he in French, "you are not a Frenchman."

"You are right," replied I.

"English, by the Virgin!" exclaimed he, and springing forward, he stretched out his hand. Though not quite in unison with the impetuous warmth of his friendship, I gave him my hand, and received a squeeze that tingled through every nerve of my body. His eyes at the same time brightened; a flush of swarthy red showed itself on the dark brown of his cheek, and he smiled as if he was sincerely and heartily pleased.

Viewing him in this light, without a shade of the ferocity which first struck me, I thought him, and still think he was, the handsomest man I ever saw. His black hair curled down upon his shoulders. He did not wear mustachios, but his upper lip only was shaved, and his beard and

whiskers were bushy and short, such as we give to a Roman hero of from thirty to forty years of age. His shirt was open at the neck, and exposed his breast covered with curly hair, and displaying a most imposing breadth and strength. "You are English," cried he, "I Spanish—are we not then friends?" He spoke his own language. I replied in French, which was easier to me, that I hoped our nations were and would be always friends.

"I hope so too," cried he, "for many a day have I fought side by side with the noble English. From the Ebro to the Adour we marched step by step together; and the passes of these hills have many a time heard the echo of my carbine joined with that of Wellington's cannon."

"You are no longer a soldier?" asked I.

"No, I am now nothing more nor less than a smuggler. Ever since the affair of Orthes, there below us, where I got a French bullet through my body, I have trod the roads of these my native mountains, making out life and cheating the king just as well as I could. You see I tell you frankly what I am, lest you might take

me for worse. A smuggler, mind you, not a robber. But, if you would know me better, ask Mina.—They say he is at Paris. Ask him the character of Josef Ramirez, the Guerilla of Jaca ! But time presses. I have a long road before me, and must not tarry. God be with you ! Adieu !”

Repeating, with these words, the friendly and forcible squeeze of the hand, the smuggler parted from me, and was in a minute or two in deep conversation with the toll-taker at the rivulet side. The latter pointed to me, as if counselling caution ; but the other, without looking at me, shook his head, and clapped his companion on the shoulder, as much as to say, “ Fear nothing—he is English.”

The short conference being ended, the smuggler stepped into the boat, without once turning his head to salute friends or look for foes. He wheeled round the cliff, and was in a moment lost to my sight, but not for ever. In about an hour afterwards, as I gazed from the top of the hill, at whose foot we parted, at the splendid view, and thrilled with a delight ever new to me, at the near prospect of these stupendous



mountains—I saw a dark cloud come sweeping down their side; and marching stoutly to meet it, the hardy figure of the smuggler caught my attention. He had made most rapid way; yet the various winding of the vales, and the lesser hills which he had crossed, kept him still sufficiently near to enable me to view him distinctly. Wishing to give him a signal of recollection and good will, I fired a shot, which reverberated in a hundred echoes round me, but he either did not hear the report, or scorned to pay attention to it.

I sat down at the moment on a smooth spot; and on one of the fragments of rock which were scattered round me, I sketched the following lines. It was not the fault of either the subject or the scene that they were not better.

### THE MOUNTAINEER.

Brave, enterprising, firm, and proud,  
He boldly steps the dangerous path,  
Faces the gathering thunder-cloud,  
Indifferent to its rising wrath:  
Scorning the shelter of the rock—  
Shrinks not, but dares the hail-storm's shock;  
Or in some wind-worn crevice laid,  
A granite cushion for his head,

Proof gainst the blast, unharm'd by cold,  
Alike from fear and sorrow free ;  
His rough bed freedom's vantage-hold,  
His shade the wings of liberty.

The riot of the heavens gone by,  
Once more the sun relumes the sky,  
And strikes the hill with burning glow,  
While lightnings scorch the vales below.—  
But the bold mountaineer defies  
These fierce contentions of the skies :  
Bounds from the earth with active spring,  
And like the untamed forest-king,  
Who quits his couch, uproused by rain,  
Shaking the big drops from his mane.—  
This mountain monarch leaves his lair,  
Dashes the cold shower from his hair ;  
Unfearing tracks his prompt advance,  
Nor deigns to cast one backward glance.  
No dastard doubts may linger near  
The free-born breeze that wantons here.—  
Pure as the fine and subtle breath  
That sports o'er Erin's circling wave,  
Wafting to every reptile death,  
But health and welcome to the brave.

Such vigorous essence, pure and wild,  
Inhales the mountain's roving child ;  
But the best boast of Erin's pride,  
Soft, social joys, he casts aside.  
He owes no binding ties to man ;  
But such as he is, fiercely free—  
He scorns the jargon that would scan  
The different shades of rank's degree.

To him all equal. By one proof  
He measures mind and body both.—  
*Strength* is his standard—far aloof  
He flings all goods of meaner growth,  
And judges by this general scale  
The lowly hind of Lasto's vale ;  
The somewhat civilized, who bask  
In the dull freedom of Venasque ;  
Polish'd or rustic ; vile or good ;  
Plebeian, noble, learned, rude,  
The beggar, wretch, or him who reigns  
Lord of Iberia's wide stretch'd plains—  
Feeble and false in every thing ;  
By force a patriot as by fraud a king !

Such is the tide of thought that fills  
The wayward wanderer of the hills.  
Boundless as Nature's self he roves,  
And Nature for her grandeur loves.  
No weakling power his passions stirs ;  
His friendships are with her and hers :  
Unknown to him each siren charm,  
Which lures the listening wretch to harm ;  
Those arts refined, which, meant to bless,  
Sink into sorrows and excess.  
His the bold intercourse that grows  
To greatness from the things it knows :  
His fellowship is grand and high ;  
He talks with tempests. The vast sky—  
The massive glacier, huge and hoar—  
The rushing blast—the torrent's roar—  
These his familiars stern and strong ;—  
He lisps in youth their lofty tongue,



Grows in their spirit, takes their tone,  
And makes their attributes his own.  
Such sure was man's primeval state,  
Like Nature, noble, wild, and great ;  
Meant for a monarch, not the slave  
Of self-born conquest ;—proudly brave,  
With lion look and eagle eye,  
Firm foot on earth, and thoughts on high.  
So came the being, rudely grand,  
Warm-glowing from his Maker's hand ;  
So stalk'd in Eden's bowers, till sin,  
Damping his energies, crept in,  
And art entwined its chill caress  
To tame his godlike savageness.

It is not necessary to state how often the verses have been reconsidered and retouched, nor the exact time occupied in the first rough sketch : but the mountaineer was out of sight when I had finished ; and luckily for me, a cottage was in view, where I made sure of a lodging for the night, which was not far distant. But before I quitted my resting-place, I took out the school-mistress's pamphlet ; and fancying that I had, in even this one day, seen enough to give me a just notion of the people of Henry IV., I thought I was fitly prepared to read the account of his birth.

I found, on examining it, that what I had got of the pamphlet was but a part of a whole. All that preceded or followed the subject of Henry's birth was torn away; but these few pages were perfect, and seemed from the conclusion to have been recently published. When I thought of turning it into English, I did not conceive myself bound to adhere very closely to the original meagre sketch, nor the errors it contained; and I therefore made some most unmerciful interpolations. The reader being thus informed that I am not responsible for all of this trifle, will, I trust, make an equitable and candid distribution; viz. to place any thing that may please him to my credit, and give the merit of what he does not like to the French writer, on whose foundation my labours were built.

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“Make haste, wife—I am just ready to set out. Make haste, make haste!”

At the voice of her impatient husband, the good wife called her son and grandson to receive the orders of the old man. The son came first.

“Joseph, you will remain all night upon the hill, until you see the flame glowing on the towers of the royal chateau. You will then light the faggots which are ready prepared, that the whole valley may learn at once that a child is born to our good king. You know, a single fire announces a girl: three—ah! if it was but a boy! woe to the Spaniards! our beautiful Navarre would not be long in their hands. But *now* our king is old, and the husband of his daughter sheds, in the service of Henry II., that blood which should be poured out in reconquering the paternal estates. And the Princess Jeanne! why, with all the courage of a man, oh! why is she a woman?”

Joseph set out for the hill, and Enriot waited for his grandfather to speak again. “My child,” said the old man, after a long pause, “you are to-day twenty years of age. To-day I should like to present you to your king:—you must come with me.” The lad trembled with joy; the grandsire went on. “Wife, give me my arms—those which I carried in our last battle against the Spaniards. Alas! it is a long time since then. I that day had the glory of shielding



with my body my wounded king.” The dame obeyed the order; the arms were taken out of the family chest, and the old man brought them to the door of the cottage. The sun was sinking behind the hills, and threw a stream of dazzling light upon these relics of the veteran’s glory. They were brilliant, for he took a pride in keeping off the ravages of rust. He placed the glittering helmet upon his head; a battered cuirass covered his broad and manly chest; in his leathern belt he hung the broad-sword which had parried the stroke meant for his monarch’s life; and lastly, he flung across his shoulders the scarlet cloak, on which were embroidered, in blue worsted, the two cows—the arms of Bearn.

Enriot was quickly prepared. A graceful cap half hid his long, brown hair; an open vest, loose breeches, woollen stockings, embroidered in different colours, and worked by his mother’s hands, with thick shoes, completed his dress. In one hand he lightly balanced the knotted staff, which served for support in climbing the hills. The other carried a small basket, into which his grandfather had put a piece of coarse bread, a

clove of garlic, freshly gathered, and a bottle of old wine of Jurançon.

After the old man had reminded the women to take to their prayers, the moment the bells should announce the commencing labour of the princess, and cautioned them to pray strongly for a boy, he and Enriot set out. For several days the whole district had awaited with anxiety this important event. Rising in the morning, they thought it impossible that it could be delayed till night; and many a sound-sleeping peasant had been startled from his rest, during the week just passed, with fancied tinglings from the steeple of Pau—while some, amongst whom was Ibarria, for so the old man was named, made regular daily pilgrimages to the castle gates. The result of these expeditions had been hitherto only disappointment, but a new dream every night promised *positive* intelligence for the following day. He moreover remembered well, that when he was a stripling, full half a century before, a reputed magician had foretold, that the day on which he had a grandson twenty years old would be the proudest day he had ever known. That

might, to be sure, have been the case from natural feeling alone, unconnected with the birth of princes ; but Ibarria insisted that there was something great woven into the prophecy : and this day being also the day of full moon, he reckoned with a certainty, in which he was borne out by the opinions of all the old women around, that the Princess Jeanne was to become that day the mother of a race of kings.

Ibarria, having served for a long period in the body guard of the king of Navarre, had accompanied his master in his retirement to Pau. The grateful monarch had given to his old soldier a house at Jurançon, and had appointed him to the care of the royal vineyards. There this faithful follower, in his honourable trust, passed his quiet days ; recounting to his children the virtuous and courageous actions of the master whom he loved so well. He nourished in their breasts two powerful passions—affection for his prince, and hatred of his foes. He had long indulged the expectation of seeing his king reconquer Pampeluna, but it was nearly dissipated, when the situation of the Princess Jeanne awoke his



slumbering ideas, and flattered his ancient hopes. He waited with impatience the promised infant, the anticipated redressor of his master's wrongs.

There never was a people more devoted to their sovereign than were the people of Bearn. There was a noble frankness in the character of the old monarch that associated admirably with their own. They loved him as a father; and his daughter shared their hearts with him. The circumstance of her having first felt the movements of the child within her bosom while in camp with her husband in Picardy, amidst the sound of drums and trumpets, flattered their warlike superstitions; and they had with one voice settled (and it was prophetic) that this forthcoming child was to be first a boy, and then a hero. Animated by this joyful hope, they waited the announcement of a prince with that respectful confidence inspired by faith in the goodness of the All-wise.

It was now the commencement of winter; but it was one of those winters into which the warm farewell of the departing season blends, as does the brilliant green with the dusky purple of a

rainbow; when the trees retain their leaves beyond their wonted time, and a casual nightingale is still heard to pour his melody upon the last traces of the dying year. The heavens still kept their serenity, and the earth its verdure; and the day seemed ruled by the lingering spirit of autumnal mildness.

As the travellers pursued their route, after evening had closed in, Ibarria had taken up his favourite strain: he was talking of the wisdom of the king, and the virtues of the princess. It was the first time, perhaps, that Enriot had listened to his grandfather with a forced attention, for they were close upon the dwelling of the venerable and gallant Franke. "Let us quit the road and take the mountain-path," said the old man suddenly, on perceiving the chesnut-trees which shaded the roof of his ancient fellow-soldier. "The way will be longer, but my heart will not throb with indignation against the perfidious friend who betrayed my confidence. My rage surprises you, perhaps.—Listen to me, child! Learn, that before I married my good wife, whom God bless and preserve! I had long loved a

young maiden of the vale of Maïa. Franke was my friend—became my rival—and, during my absence in the wars, possessed himself of her for whom I would have given my life. Oh, but she was good and handsome! You have seen her grand-daughter Laurinette? She is her very image. You must have remarked her—Is she not lovely?”

Enriot made an inclination of the head, for he *had* remarked the girl. He followed his grandfather awhile in silence; but just as they came to a little grove of acacias, he cast a look among the trees, and coughed. Receiving no answer, he suddenly clapped his hand to his forehead and exclaimed, “What a head I have here! Dear grandfather, will you forgive me? I have left behind me the bodice which sister Catrine has worked for Mademoiselle de Montbrun, and which I so positively promised to take to Pau. I must step back for it.”

“You must *not* step back for it, stupid boy!” said old Ibarria, sharply. “What, keep me waiting at a time like this, when all the country is pressing to the castle—and for a paltry bodice,



forsooth!"—"But, consider, sir, it is meant to do honour to our princess, and the young prince she is *sure* to give us! And you know, my dear grandfather, that walk as fast as you will, I shall overtake you with ease before you reach the river."

This reasoning was conclusive with Ibarria, for he was fond of the notion of honouring the princess and the prince he was so *sure* of; and nothing was to him a trifle which tended to that point. Besides, he was proud of Enriot's agility, and loved to follow him with his eyes as he bounded along the mountain-paths, full as graceful, and almost as fleet, as the Iazard which he chased from pic to pic. "Go along then, puppy!" cried Ibarria—and Enriot was in a moment at full speed.

Laurinette, whom Enriot had *remarked*, was at this identical moment in one of her most peevish and fretful moods; but her peevishness had something so gentle and bewitching in it, that it was often preferred to other people's good humour. Her temper, was now, however, tried

to the utmost, for Franke, her grandfather, had made her sit down to her usual evening's task of reading him to sleep; but, by an uncommon perversity, had not begun to doze at the second or third page, as was his regular custom. Laurinette turned her eyes oftener towards a little *acacia grove*, visible from the window, than she fixed them upon the old history of the Kings of Navarre. The breaks which she thus made in the narrative kept up the attention of the old man, defeating her own object, and the natural effects of the narrative itself.

She thus went on for some time, but was at last on the point of losing all command of herself, for she saw the moonlight slowly mixing with the gray vapours that covered the mountain tops; and she would certainly have burst into tears had not her grandfather begun to nod in his chair, and in a moment more given a nasal notice that he was fast asleep. Laying down her book, she was preparing to steal towards the door, when a voice, not new to her, warbled from the garden the following

## RUSTIC SERENADE.

## I.

Laurinette dear, the sun is down,  
His last glance fades on the mountain's peak ;  
And the drooping heads of the herbage brown  
Are faintly tinged with his yellow streak.  
The moisten'd foliage warmly weeps ;  
Still is the villagers' evening hum ;  
Nature is hush'd, and echo sleeps—  
Laurinette dear to thy lover come !

## II.

Mark in the eastern heavens a light  
That shines on the flowers which the dews have wet ;  
'Tis the wakening glance of the queen of night,  
And, slothful girl ! thou comest not yet.  
The nightingale warbles his notes of love,  
Perch'd on the quivering branches high,  
While the fluttering leaves might be thought to move  
In time to his moonlight melody.

## III.

The rivulets gush from the mountain springs  
To freshen the still warm breath of the vale ;  
Zephyr is out on his silvery wings,  
And pleasure is floating abroad on the gale.  
But pleasure, and beauty, and music, all  
To the heart of the lover are chill and dumb,  
While the maiden he dotes on slights his call.  
Then Laurinette dear to *thy* lover come !



The echo to this last line was a sweet embrace from the lips of the lovely girl; and Enriot forgot for a moment all else in the world. It will be divined by the reader that this young couple had been a long time very good friends, unknown to their grandsires, whose enmity had kept them asunder. It will probably be suspected too, that the asserted forgetfulness of the bodice was wholly a fabrication of the amorous Enriot. Such was the truth; for the bodice had been snugly deposited in his bosom on his leaving home, and had he but had a glimpse of Laurinette in passing the acacia grove, he would not have been forced to the falsehood. As it was, I hope it will be held venial in such a good cause, without any serious injury to religion or morals.

This stolen interview was as rapid as lightning, and as brilliant too. The moment it lasted might be called a drop of "the essence of time." The hearts of the lovers was the alembic in which it was doubly distilled; and its fragrance had not evaporated when Enriot rejoined his grandfather at half a league's distance from the house of Franke. "Well, sir, I have caught you," cried

he, panting for breath. "You are a good boy," replied the old man, and they went silently on.

The birth-day of an heir is joyous for a family. How glorious for a kingdom is the birth-day of a sovereign! Hardly were the first strokes of the bells heard by the anxious inhabitants of Pau, than they rushed out to inquire the news. The lively sounds spread quickly over the plain, through which the Gave winds tranquilly along. They struck upon the ears of Ibarria and Enriot, just as they had reached the rising grounds which stretch before the town and towers of Pau. They had both been for some time silent. Ibarria's thoughts had swept over a space nearly as extensive as is allotted to the life of man—had dwelt awhile on his early hours—then rushed back to present days—and ended by subsiding into mental prayers for a prince. Enriot was thinking of something else.

"On, on, my boy! we loiter. I would not for my whole vintage be too late." They hurried up the ascent. The straining eyes of the old man would have penetrated the hill. Enriot burned with impatience, but slackened his steps

to keep pace with his grandsire. At last the fuller sounds of the bells came unobstructed on their ears; they reached the summit; and the whole enchanting panorama, lit by the full moon, burst upon their sight.

The Spanish proverb says, that “they have seen nothing who have not seen Seville.” How little have they seen who have not seen Pau! Its lovely sloping hill covered with gardens and vineyards; its neat buildings, rising in gradations of beauty, and reposing in masses of verdure; its proud and glittering castle towering over all, with white flags floating salutation to the rivers, the forests, the mountains! But who can describe it? O no one.—It is one of those views to be seen and felt; when the mind is raised by the contemplation of nature’s magnificence; and the heart softened by the fulness of her bounty.

Ibarria and Enriot had many a time viewed this scene; but they stopped, even now, awhile in involuntary admiration, and gazed upon it till a dark cloud, covering the face of the moon, robbed the landscape of its lustre, and warned them to proceed. The bells are still ringing;



they have now a downhill path, and they gain upon the road. But just as they reach the borders of the river, and at the instant that they put their first step upon the bridge, the bells suddenly cease, and a fire bursts high from the castle's central tower. The travellers stop short—their expectant eyes are fixed upon the other towers. Let imagination fancy their appearance.—Their quickened pulse, and breath arrested—their gazing countenances, flushed cheeks, and flowing hair—their picturesque attire—their graceful figures !

Thus they stood for some seconds, every one of which appeared an hour. “But one fire—but *one*, grandfather?” asked, rather than exclaimed, Enriot. “Great God, thy will be done !” cried the old man. The suspense continued—it was intolerable. They could not have borne it longer, when a little gleam spread flickering on the western turret, and in an instant the combustible matter shot upwards its flames upon the sky. Another fire, on the corresponding turret, completed the signal for a boy ; and salvos of artillery roared out. The shouts of enthusiastic

thousands joined the joyous chorus; and the hills sent on from crag to crag reverberations of the sounds.

Where are the travellers? Ah! behold them—on their knees; their heads uncovered; their hands clasped together, and raised towards Heaven; their eyes fixed upon the blazing signals; their cheeks streaming with tears!

They are soon again upon their feet, and quickly ascend the rapid path which leads from the river to the castle. They pause but one moment to look back towards home, hoping to see their little signal-fire. They turn their heads, and do see their signal-fire, no doubt—but it is in vain that they would hope to distinguish it amongst a hundred blazing from the summit of a hundred hills.

They reached the castle. The portcullis was raised, the draw-bridge down, and no guards were seen to obstruct the rush of the crowd. The court-yard was already filled when Ibarria and Enriot arrived. The uniform of the old soldier, his respectable character, as well as the well-known friendship of the king, were all so

many causes for clearing a way for his approach. He penetrated through the crowd, and directed his steps to the private staircase, by which he was privileged to enter, leaving the grand approach to the thousands who were, for the first time, promiscuously admitted. As he mounted the steps, followed by Enriot, a strain of music seemed to invite his approach. Instead of the plaintive cries which he expected to have heard, he distinguished an old song of the country, and was surprised at any one venturing to sing at such a time. The air was one of mingled tenderness and solemnity, and the words were pronounced in a feeble and tremulous tone. Fatigued by his long walk, and by the height of the staircase, Ibarria stopped awhile to recover breath. Enriot stood wrapped in astonishment and awe; and they heard the following

## SONG OF THE PRINCESS JEANNE\*.

## I.

Sing! for the voice of the newly born  
Falls in sweet sounds on the mother's ear;  
Like the sun-beam mix'd with the cloud of morn,  
On her cheek is a blended smile and tear.

\* Jeanne d'Albret wishing to see her father's will, he promised to show it to her, "A condition que dans l'en-



## II.

The vows of her lover, her husband's kiss,  
 Were dear when in joy's young hours she smiled ;  
 But feeble and faint to her matron bliss  
 As she clasps to her bosom her first-born child.

## III.

When the child is a man, to the battle field  
 He will follow his father the foe to meet ;  
 And in victory's pride lay his foeman's shield,  
 With a high-throbbing heart, at his mother's feet!

During the last stanza of the song Ibarria and Enriot had reached the head of the stairs. The door before them was open and unguarded. They hesitated an instant whether they should enter or not, and interchanged looks of mutual uncertainty. While thus silently, mentally debating, a woman, from the apartment within, perceiving them, ran forward, and exclaimed in a transport of joy, "Come in, come in; he is

fantement elle luy chanteroit une chanson '*afin*,' luy dit il, '*que tu ne me fasses pas un enfant pleureux et rechigné*.' La Princesse le luy promit, et eut tant de courage, que malgré les grandes douleurs qu'elle suffroit, elle luy tint parole, et en chanta une en son langage Bernois."—*Hist. du Roy Henry le Grand, par de Perefixe*, t. i. p. 16.

Notwithstanding this authority of the Bishop of Rhodéz, it will be observed that I have made the princess sing *after* the birth.

born!" She drew them along, and led them to the chamber of the princess, where they had been preceded by a multitude admitted without distinction or inquiry.

The old monarch was leaning over his daughter's bed. He took the infant from her arms, and raising it in his own, he turned towards the crowd, and showing it to all, he cried aloud, "You see it is a boy!" It was at this moment that Ibarria, taking from his grandson's basket the clove of garlic and the wine, presented them to the king, who kindly smiled, on recognising his old preserver. The monarch himself then rubbed the clove of garlic to the infant's lips, and having poured a little of the wine into a goblet, he offered it to the child. He drank it with avidity, and without uttering a cry; and, as though his imperfect vision had acquired its powers, he turned round the circle his half-open eyes.

"What is his name?" asked a voice. Another exclaimed, "Call him Henry, after his grandfather!" "Be it so," said the old king;

and all cried, "Long live Henry!" The crowd which waited on the staircase, in the halls, the chambers, and the court-yard, echoed the cry thus sent forth; and the sound of its genuine honesty would have been a good lesson for the venal and the factious, who sometimes open out their roaring throats.

The monarch caused a window to be thrown wide, and advanced upon the balcony. A tear of joy trickled down his hollowed cheek. The child which he carried in his arms seemed, to the admiring crowd, to wear a smile upon his unconscious lips; and his little hand, which was entangled in the grey beard of his grandsire, they would have it was playing there by design. The old king held up towards Heaven this son which it had bestowed upon his people; and making a sign that he would speak, an immediate silence succeeded the buzz which had prevailed in the crowd. "A child is born to all," said he. "He will love you as I love you." Observing near him an old soldier of Navarre, who could not restrain his tears, "Be joyous



and happy, my gallant friend," added he, with a tone and bearing that seemed like inspiration. "My Lamb has brought forth a Lion\*!"

A burst of acclamation and delight, still louder than the former, welcomed these words of the monarch. Every approach to the chamber of the princess was then thrown open by his orders, that all might come and gaze upon the child—the hope of his race.

There was in the castle a large tortoise-shell, which some sailors of Bayonne had formerly found on a distant shore, and which they had presented to the princess as one of the curious productions of the sea. This shell was placed in a large hall adjoining the chamber of the princess, and it was in this extraordinary and unostentatious cradle that the old Henry placed his new-

\* Les Espagnols avoient dit autrefois par raillerie sur la naissance de la mere de notre Henry, "Miracle! la vache a fait une brebis," entendent par ce mot de vache, la Reine Marguerite, sa mere, car ils l'appelloient ainsi, et son mary, le vacher, faisant allusion aux armes de Bearn, qui sont deux vaches. Le Roy Henry se souvenant de cette froide raillerie des Espagnols, disoit de joye, "Voyez maintenant, ma brebis a enfanté un Lion!"—*De Perefixe*, t. i. p. 17.

born namesake. “I choose,” said he, “that he should sleep in a cradle the gift of my people; he who will one day be called on to wake and watch over their welfare.” The crowd rushed once more round the infant prince, and all admired his strength and beauty. The child was not at all alarmed at the concourse—a thing little extraordinary in one just born, but which the people chose to consider a miracle, as if some early instinct made him already distinguish that he was in the midst of his devoted subjects.

Ibarria took this opportunity of approaching the monarch, holding Enriot by the hand. “At this moment of general devotion,” said he, “my sovereign will not disdain the offering of his faithful servant.” Then kneeling, with Enriot beside him, “Here, my liege, I give you this full-grown lad to be the honest follower of this noble infant, as I have been to your majesty.” The king, putting his hand on Enriot’s head, said solemnly, “I bless you, my worthy lad. Grow up in the steps of your gallant grandsire, and a better blessing—that of Heaven—will be with you! And now, Ibarria, you must return

me kind for kind. Here, give thy blessing to this child. The benediction of fidelity and courage must bring good luck with it."

Ibarria, with a half-diffident yet affecting solemnity, approached the cradle. He contemplated the child for some time in silence, then bending on one knee he cried, "I bless thee, noble infant, hope of the people! Thou wilt be brave, for thy mother felt thee bounding in her bosom in the middle of a camp. Thou wilt be good, for thou wilt resemble thy grandsire. Thou wilt be just, for thou wilt follow his counsel and example. Thou wilt be the joy of thy people, for cries of gladness, and not tears, have awaited on thy birth! Be blest, then, royal child! In thee finishes the name of Albret—in thee begins the name of Bourbon. May this glorious name become more famous than all the names of kings; and may God accord to thee and thy posterity the favours reserved for his well-beloved!"

Then, drawing his long rapier, Ibarria touched the cradle with the blade. "Now it is consecrated," said he, placing the sword in the hands



of Enriot. “You will carry it to defend him, since age disables me.” But Enriot knew nought of this appeal. From the moment that he felt the royal hand upon his head, both sense and feeling seemed to have abandoned their throne. He remained fixed on his knees, his eyes fastened on the floor, his neck bent low, and his arms crossed upon his breast. He was aroused from his waking trance by the rough jokes of his young companions, who had formed a circle round him; and starting up, confused and ashamed, he hurried after his grandfather, whom he saw slowly making his way through the crowd. Enriot confessed, in many an after day, that the memory of this moment—when the dreams of wealth and ambition had made him forget awhile humility and love—was his best preservative against the temptations which many a time assailed him during life.

Returning towards Jurançon, Enriot wished to lead his father from the high road, by the path they had followed in going to Pau. “No,” said the old man, “my heart is filled with joy; and there is no room for hatred to find a place

there." He then walked straight up to the house of Franke, pushed open the door without knocking, and entered the kitchen. This unlooked-for visit astonished Franke and his granddaughter, who were sitting by the fire, late as it was, conversing with some of their happy neighbours on the subject of the auspicious birth. Franke got up, and advanced towards Ibarria, whom he did not at first recognize. "Franke," said the latter with a faltering voice, and taking him by the hand, "we are old enemies—but older friends. I forget every thing now but our early regard. The birth of this prince should reunite all good royalists, who may perhaps require this union when the child is big enough to lead them to battle. Alas! I forget my years. No matter. Franke, we were once friends—let us be so again, and always!"

The warm-hearted and generous Franke threw himself into Ibarria's arms, exclaiming, "Oh! why is *she* not alive to see this happy hour? She, who was till death your truest friend!"

While the old men embraced each other, the whole circle around them shed tears of joy at the

reconciliation. The news spread quickly over the neighbourhood. Enriot, who had *remarked* Laurinette, married her amidst blessings and rejoicings; and it is even said that, to this day, their descendants are prouder of tracing their ancestry up to such a couple, than of the worldly distinction which has followed a long course of industry and virtue.



## THE EXILE OF THE LANDES.

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With great courage and elevation of sentiment, he told the court that “ the crime of which he stood accused was not a deed performed in a corner ; the sound of it had gone forth to most nations ; \* \* \* \* that for no temporal advantage would he offer injury to the poorest man or woman that stood upon the earth ; \* \* \* \* and that he had still, through every danger, held fast his principles and his integrity.”

HUME'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND. vol. vii. p. 356.



THE  
EXILE OF THE LANDES.

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EVERY body has heard of the Landes of France, and many of my countrymen have traversed them in their route from Paris to the Pyrenees ; but few who have not seen them, or similar tracts, can form a notion of these monotonous solitudes.

Being unwilling to infringe on the rights of my brother scribblers, who dress up their loose thoughts in the form of tours and travels, I shall not enter into regular description, or details of distances. I shall content myself with saying, that the Landes stretch from the Gironde to the Adour, between north and south—are washed by the bay of Biscay on the west—and lose themselves to the eastward, by insensibly mingling with the fertile plains of Aire and Villeneuve de Marsan. A gazetteer and a map will tell the rest.



Extensive pine-woods cover this ocean of sands. Here and there a hut or a hamlet forms the centre of a patch of green, on which troops of ragged sheep or goats are seen to browse ; while the unmeaning look of the being who attends them marks his mental affinity to the flock, as his sheep-skin mantle gives him an external similitude.

I left Bordeaux to explore these wastes, on a summer's morning, when the first beams of day were opening on the heavens ; and the birds were shaking off the drowsiness of night, stretching out their little wings, and arranging their ruffled plumage—with the coquetry of a fine lady, settling her dishevelled ringlets, or the trimming of her cap.

It was then that I was forcibly struck with the belief that vanity was not peculiar to mankind : that the prancing of the steed, the strut of the cock, and the contortions of the monkey, were but some of those gradatory shades exhibited by poor mortality from pride to dandyism. Be it so ! thought I ; let the brute creation rival the *genus homo*, and share with us another of

our privileges.—God knows we often meet them half-way in coming to a level !

I was roused from the train of thought which followed these reflections, on finding my progress impeded by the nature of the soil I trod on. I was wading through sand, having wandered into one of the by-roads, which branch off in a hundred directions, on the borders of the Landes. I made an effort to reconnoitre my position, but with little success. Around me, on every side, were tall pines. No vista showed me the track I had travelled, for the road had wound, in most irregular meanderings, into this forest. Above was the dark blue sky, and below the sandy soil, deep and parched by the meridian sun. I was for a moment a little embarrassed, but I soon recovered myself. I first looked at poor Ranger's discontented face, but got no information there. He was stretched panting at the foot of a fir-tree, and his eyes were turned on me, as if asking for refreshment or consolation.

Having utterly lost my way, I had only to remark the direction of my shadow on the ground, and, making towards an opening which allowed

this observation, I quickly discovered that it pointed towards the east. Knowing that the sea lay in a contrary direction, I was satisfied, and went onwards, without fear of retracing my steps; and coming in a little while to a scanty patch of herbage, I sat down upon it, and produced from my wallet my stock of cold meat and bread.

After our repast, which the want of water rendered rather defective, Ranger and myself seemed inspired alike with fresh vigour. We set out again; and while he made some circular excursions in the wood, fruitlessly hoping to light on a rivulet or a covey, I plodded onward in whatever path presented itself on my route.

I calculated on falling in with some straggling village or hut, where I might repose for the night, if I found it impracticable to reach La Teste, a little town on the coast, to which I was more immediately bound. As I relapsed into my reverie, I forgot myself again; and I sauntered onwards in this mood, until the sun had sunk in a misty and threatening sky. The earth was overhung with clouds, and a wind of evil omen swept gloomily across the desert, and



shook the branches of the dark tall pines. I began now, in good earnest, to look about me, and increasing my speed in a straight-forward direction, I reached, in about half an hour, the extremity of the wood in which I had so long wandered. My path opened out into an almost boundless plain, but I saw at first no habitation nor living object. I felt excessively fatigued, from the heavy sandy soil through which I had all day laboured. I was also a second time hungry, and I had besides some inquietudes for Ranger. Those woods abound with wolves; and if night had actually closed in before I got to shelter, we might both have been in jeopardy.

While I thus communed with myself, I marked, on the dusky horizon, two figures of gigantic height, which I at first thought two isolated fir-trees bending to the blast; but their motion soon betrayed them to be no inanimate production, as with long and rapid strides they were quickly crossing the waste. Determined to bring them to, I discharged one barrel of my gun. They stopped; and, as I concluded that they turned towards me, I quickly fired off the other, and

then shouted with all my might, at the same time making towards them. They perceived me, and strided to meet me, with a speed at once ridiculous and appalling ; and I may safely say, that since Gulliver was in Brobdignag, no traveller had reason to think less of himself.

As they approached, I saw them to be men mounted on monstrously high stilts, and I then recollected the accounts I had read and heard of the shepherds of the Landes. These were the first specimens which had come within my observation ; and I had, in my abstraction, quite forgotten what I might so naturally have looked for.

When these singular beings neared me, I discerned every particular detail of their appearance and costume. The latter was composed of a coarse woollen jacket and breeches, loose at the knees. A round worsted cap, such as is worn by the Aberdeenshire shepherd, was placed on the head. Long masses of lank, black hair flowed over the shoulders, covered with a cloak of sheep skin. Their legs were defended with rude garters of the same, and an uncouth

caricature of sandals was fastened to their feet. They both carried long poles, to aid their march and keep them steady; and they each actually held in their clumsy hands a coarse stocking, and a set of knitting rods (I cannot call them needles); thus putting art and industry in the only light in which they could appear a mockery.

They were both about the middle age, if I might form a judgment from their bushy beards and furrowed cheeks; but as to their dispositions, capabilities, or propensities (which some theorists are so fond of discovering at a glance), I could not even guess. They had faces fit for the study of Lavater: no one else could have made any thing of them.

When they came near me, they made a full stop. I accosted them in French, and asked if they could direct me to an inn, which I understood was somewhere in those parts?

A negative shake of the head was their reply.

I next demanded if I was near La Teste?

The answer was repeated.

I then begged them to inform me whether



there was any cottage at hand, where I might obtain shelter ?

A positive “no” seemed shaken from each silent head.

I thought this the acme of inhospitality, and so unlike what I had met hitherto in the country, that I could scarcely credit my senses ; but the immoveable and petrifying unsociability of the faces I gazed on confirmed the worst, and I wished for a moment that I were with a couple of Bedouin Arabs, on their native deserts.

During our short conversation, of which I had all the words, and they the eloquence (as far as it lies in action), I could not trace a change of muscle or variation of expression in their countenances. To finish the fruitless and uncomfortable conference, I rather abruptly asked them where I was ?

A silent shake of the head left me as wise as before.

It was not till then that I began to suspect, what my intelligent readers will by this time, no doubt, be sure of—that the poor shepherds did not comprehend one word of my discourse. No

sooner did this notion strike me, than I strung together such words of Gascon as I had picked up during my sojourn in the Perigord; but it was now quite as useless as French had been; and I had a new proof of the truth, that in this part of France each district has its *patois* perfectly distinct, and scarcely to be understood by the inhabitants of parts almost adjacent. I was thus at length reduced to that universal and natural language, in which fingers supply the use of tongues, and gestures that of sounds. I pointed out, by every possible intimation, my wants of eating and repose. Bless your bright intellects! thought I, as one of them gave me a significant, assenting nod, which was silently echoed by the pate of his companion. They then muttered something to each other; and, fulfilling the strict forms of desert etiquette, they advanced in mincing strides, beckoning me to follow their guidance.

Ranger and I gladly took the hint. Our conductors moderated their pace; we increased ours, and thus contrived to produce a harmony of movement. I shall not weary the reader with a de-

tail of our march for the first half hour, which was beguiled by the shepherds, by a communication in their own peculiar jargon, and by Ranger and his master in the selfsame way.

As we went on, in a westwardly direction, the wind blew fiercely, but not freshly, in our faces. It was hot and smothering. The labouring skies seemed preparing to discharge their overloaded breasts, and distant thunder rolled along the horizon, still reddened by the departed sun. The masses of clouds which came upon the earth quickly shut out the day, and rose at opposite extremities into huge mountains of vapour. They were illuminated by fitful flashes of lightning, and looked like giant batteries erected in the heavens. As they rushed onwards from the west, they shot down vivid streams, which at times pierced to the very earth, like quivering blades of fire. Again the electric fluid took a horizontal direction through the skies; and its dazzling streak fluttered like a radiant streamer, till it lost itself among the clouds. Darkness came on with a suddenness such as I had never before observed, and the gusts of wind were ter-



rific. They swept across the waste like floods of air, lashing the sands like waves, and bearing down all before them. Every single-standing tree within our sight was shivered into atoms; but the crash, when these whirlwinds met the opposition of the pine-woods, baffles description. It appeared as if whole chasms were rent away in the forest; and between each blast we heard the howling of the wolves, terrified at the storm, or probably wounded by the shattered branches, and angry with the element, which must have dashed them at intervals to the earth.

As for me, my guides, and my poor dog, we were in the opening of the tempest repeatedly thrown to the ground. The shepherds were early obliged to quit their stilts, and I found them in every way on a level with me. Their experience furnished them no resource that I had not at hand; and when at length a desperate gust whirled us round like spinning-tops, I flung myself prostrate on the sands; one hand encircling Ranger, who clung trembling to my bosom, and the other grasping the stem of a newly-shattered fir-tree. The shepherds followed my

example, and throughout the whole scene showed less presence of mind than stupid apathy.

This magnificent and awful war of nature continued about twenty minutes. The wind then dropped suddenly still, as if forced from the heavens by the torrents of rain which poured upon us. We raised ourselves up, and the shepherds pursued their course. They mounted again upon their stilts, and I followed their track. Reiterated claps of thunder burst directly over our heads, and the broad lightnings gleamed in liquid sheets through the sea of rain which every cloud cast down.

I was nearly overpowered with fatigue, for the wet sand was to me almost impassable; while my wooden-legged companions found but little obstruction from it. My delight may then be imagined when I saw them stop suddenly before a house, which the darkness of the night prevented my observing, till we were actually against its wall. They shouted together, and the door was cautiously half-opened by a woman with a resin taper in her hand.

At the welcome prospect of the open door,

our whole party made a simultaneous rush for entrance. Ranger, who was the first on the threshold, had scarcely put his foot there when a huge shaggy dog, of a breed peculiar to the Landes, darted upon him, seized him by the throat, and tossed him to the ground. I used, for a while, every effort to tear the ruffian from his hold, and called vociferously to the woman to take him off; but the demand being unheeded or unheard, I cocked my gun, and by a desperate threat (which the drenched state of the piece made probably very harmless) I strove to alarm the house for the safety of its guardian. I saw several men seated within, who took my appeal with indifference; and, resolved in my rage to attempt the perpetration of my threat, I was in the act of putting my finger to the trigger, when my arm was forcibly seized from behind, and I, at the same time, thus accosted: "Young man, what would you do? Shoot that animal, and you are sure to die upon the spot!"

"Let me go," cried I, with impatience; "my dog is strangling in the gripe of that monster—by heavens! I'll——;" but before my sentence



was finished, the savage had loosed his hold, and was fawning at the foot of the man who had spoken to me.

A word from him had saved Ranger, his assailant, and, if this stranger was to be believed, perhaps myself. Ranger crouched between my legs, as I reproached the man for keeping a dog so dangerous. He calmly replied, "The dog is not mine—but he only did his duty. He belongs to the people of this house; and the group within would certainly have revenged any harm done to him. Permit me to say you are now in a region where prudence is a useful virtue."

There was a tone of softness and benevolence in this address; and the light from the house showed me his figure as he spoke. He was tall, and wrapped in a large blue Spanish cloak, fastened at the collar with a silver clasp. He wore a handsome fur-cap. His face was quite in unison with his voice—dignified and tender.

I was much struck with his appearance and manner; and expressed my thanks for his interference, and for the service he had done me.

"Ah! sir," said he, "you know not how much

I owe a life of servitude to mankind. This poor deed weighs light in the balance against a load of crime."

He seized my hand as he said this, and pressed it hard, without seeming to know what he did. He as suddenly let it drop—started back—pulled his cap upon his brow—muffled himself in his cloak, and turned from me.

"Good God, sir!" cried I, "you are not surely going out in this dreary night?"

"Yes, sir, I am," replied he sternly, "and let me see who dares to follow me!"

I stared after him, but he was lost in the darkness. I felt a thrill of curiosity, admiration, and, I believe, awe; but I turned in a moment, and entered the house.

## CHAPTER II.

MY first impulse was to address the woman, whose bustling mien pronounced her to be mistress of the mansion; while the whole decoration of the kitchen, in which I stood, stamped upon the house itself the joyous character of an inn. To my rapid question of "Who was the gentleman that has just gone out?" I got at first no reply. The hostess eyed me from head to foot, with an unflattering and suspicious look. The four or five rough fellows near the fire stood up and gathered round me. I appeared not to heed their curiosity, and persisted for the gratification of my own. I repeated my question.

"And pray, my friend," asked the hostess, "what business is that of yours? Who are *you*? A spy, perhaps, sent here to entrap a better man."

"It seems so,"—"like enough," and other



such expressions, were echoed from the group by which I was encircled; and I saw there was no friendly feeling towards me breeding among the party. “Foreigner!” and “Englishman!” and “*sacre*” and “*peste*!” and exclamations of like import were sent mutteringly round; and, knowing that prevention is easier than cure, I thought it wise to avert a storm which I might not be able to allay. Assuming, therefore, an air of frankness and confidence, which I never knew to fail, which I never saw even a gloomy group of Spaniards able to withstand, but which acts like a spell on the sociable disposition of the French, I told shortly my situation and pursuits. I convinced them that I was neither a spy nor an enemy; that my inquiries concerning the mysterious stranger proceeded from gratitude and good will;—and I was in five minutes seated down among them, quite one of themselves, and placed, by acclamation, in the warmest corner of the chimney. Similar regard was shown to Ranger, who stretched himself in great enjoyment before the crackling faggots, happily forgetful of the roughness of his first reception.

Many civilities were showered on me, in the shapes of sundry articles of dress (my knapsack and its contents being wet through and through), drams from the brandy bottle, and innumerable kind speeches and offers of service.

Having got myself dry and warm, a craving appetite was next to be gratified. I asked the good and handsome hostess what I could have; and she said that Bordeaux contained few delicacies which she could not give me as well. A long list of luxuries followed this assurance, and her tongue ran glibly over the niceties of a *traiteur's* ordinary catalogue. But, lest I should be led away by hopes of these proffered dainties, one of the jovial fellows, who sipped a twopenny bottle of wine beside me, threw me a knowing wink, as much as to say that mine hostess had only a *poetical* licence for offering the good things recapitulated; and that ortolans, Bayonne ham, truffled turkies, and perigord pie, existed only in the larder of her imagination. As to me this was but little disappointment, for my appetite could ill brook the delay of such high-sounding preparations; and my eye seemed to turn in

natural humility to viands more homely, and more appropriate to the place.

Thanking the good lady, therefore, for the civil list with which she had been willing to cherish my expectations and regale my fancy, I begged her to give me a supper more suitable to present circumstances and pedestrian travellers. In a moment a coarse, but clean, cloth and napkin graced my little table. A bottle of sour wine, a decanter of muddy water, a loaf of brown bread, full three feet in length, a salt-cellar filled with salt, and another with pepper, a plate, a drinking-glass, a heavy, ill-formed silver fork and spoon, and a knife, which the clumsiest apprentice of Birmingham would be ashamed to own, were quickly scattered before me—in the fullest spirit of that want of order, which so peculiarly marks the preparation for a French repast.

My bustling landlady was aided in every thing by a rosy, smooth-faced lass, in a close and stiff starched cap, blue bodice, and red woollen petticoat; and in a little while they placed on the table a small earthen tureen, whose brown exterior was not a shade more dark than the mess



of soup which smoked within, and which sent up a savoury fume, where the odour of garlic had a proud pre-eminence. An omelet of six eggs, mixed well with herbs of all varieties, was already in the frying-pan, and the plump brown arm of Cazille was stretched out to place it on the fire. The hostess's hand was in the act of cutting from a string of black puddings one whose dimensions seemed suited to a Patagonian mouth. I was preparing with my spoon to dive into the cloud-enveloped mysteries of the tureen, when all our operations were suspended, and all our attentions roused by the tramping of a horse, and a loud accompanying shout from a voice of stentorian tone.

“Heavens!” exclaimed the landlady, “It is Monsieur the inspector of the forests!”

Monsieur the inspector !

The inspector !

Inspector !

Spectre !

was re-echoed by every mouth, from Cazille's down to my own, in all the gradations from surprise to inquiry. Ranger himself filled up the

climax by a note, which might be something between admiration and interrogation. Every one started up and made towards the door, carrying with them all the candles and resin matches which the kitchen had alight. The string of black puddings dangled uncut upon the wall—the embryo omelet was upset into the fire—and the spoonful of soup remained untasted in my hand.

This moment of awful suspense was followed by the entrance of the important personage, to whom such unconditional homage had been rendered by mistress and maid, man and beast, black pudding and omelet. Monsieur the inspector came bustling in, with that air of moistened dignity, which sits so naturally on a great man. dren ched with rain.

He was a broad-set figure, with dusky skin and frizzled whiskers of vast expansion. His huge jackboots, redoubled doubles of silk handkerchiefs, and a multitude of many collared coats, had been all unable to secure him from the wet. He streamed like a river God, from the rowels of his spurs up to every corner of his large cocked

hat. In each hand he carried a pistol, and as he strode forwards to the fire, a long sabre rattled against the tiles of the floor.

He made his way over every obstacle, upsetting two chairs, a warming-pan, and a basket of fish. Every one made way *for* him, so that he was not long in reaching the wide and comfortable hearth. It must not be supposed that all this was done in silent majesty—no such thing. Every step was accompanied by an exclamation, and every exclamation echoed by an oath.

“What a night of hell! \* \* \* \*! What a rascally storm! \* \* \* \*! What diabolical weather! \* \* \* \*!”

The asterisks stand for oaths; I am literal in every thing else, but they, thank God! defy translation. Of these disgraces of the language, and the peculiar scandal of this part of France, he was most prodigal, and would have reminded every reader of Gresset’s *Vert-vert*, of the foul-mouthed parrot, when

Les ———, les ———, voltigeaient sur son bec,  
Les jeunes sœurs crurent qu’il parlait Grec.

The inspector rapidly disencumbered himself



of all extraneous matter, flung aside his great coat, hat, boots, pistols, belt, and sabre; and almost threw himself into the embraces of the flames, which the crackling pinewood sent out in broad folds across the chimney. I was so much amused with the scene, that I suspended all my projected operations, and fixed my attention on this new object.

He was at first gruff and surly, receiving without any acknowledgment, but an occasional curse, the officious attentions of the landlady and Cazille, and the humble addresses of the men around him. He flung himself into the arm chair which was placed for him, and, his back being towards me, he quite overlooked me sitting in my nook. As the warmth of the blaze dried up his exterior it seemed to melt his heart, for he threw a "thankye" at the hostess, as she adjusted the second worsted stocking round his knee; and he chucked Cazille under the chin, and kissed her forehead, while she stooped to place the slippers on his feet.

The rest of the party came in for their share of kindness, in the way that follows. "And

who have we here, eh? A gang of blackguard smugglers, \* \* \* \*! Oh! I beg pardon, gentlemen—fishermen! Egad, one might have known your trade by your smell, \* \* \* \*! Stand back, friends, I hate perfumery. Well! what have you got in your baskets to-night? Turbot and brandy sauce, \* \* \* \*! I'll warrant it the bottoms are as well lined with bottles of Cognac, as the tops with stinking mackerel, \* \* \* \*! But take care; I'll give a hint to the Octroi\*, be sure of it; and if you are once caught at the barrier you shall lie in the Fort† till you are as withered and rotten as a piece of salted cod, \* \* \* \*!”

A burst of laughter from the speaker pronounced this to be wit; and an answering peal from his circle told that they knew the time to acknowledge his joke. Several smart and pleasant sayings were retorted on the inspector; but the most substantial repartee, that is the best of the *good things*, appeared in the shape of a noble turbot, which one of the fishermen produced from

\* The toll-house.

† The prison of Bordeaux is an old castle called the Fort du Hâ, but familiarly “The Fort.”

his stock. This spokesman "hoped, in the name of himself and comrades, that Monsieur the inspector would do them the honour of accepting the fish, and give himself the trouble of smelling it, to be sure that it was fresh."

"\* \* \* \* ! one can't refuse," was the reply ; and he pulled out his purse, as with a would-be effort, to pay for the compliment.

"Oh ! oh ! oh !" cried the fishermen in concert, "what is Monsieur the inspector going to do ? Pay for it ! Always like himself, generous and noble ! No, no, no ! It's the least we can do for monsieur ; and we shall be too well rewarded, if he will do us the honour of giving himself the trouble to write a little word to the gentlemen of the Octroi at Bordeaux, to let us pass the barrier without search, that we may get to the market early, and pull up for the time we have lost in the storm."

"Oh, willingly !" cried Monsieur the inspector. "God forbid I should refuse so slight a kindness to such honest fellows as I know you all to be. Give me a pen, Cazille ! But hark'ye, my friends ! you are sure there is no brandy ?"



“ My word of honour !” burst from every mouth.

“ Hold !” cried the inspector, tender of their consciences, “ Hold, don’t finish the sentence, my good fellows ! I know you are honest, healthy-lunged lads, and you’ll want all your breath to puff off your fish to the fat merchants of the Chartrons \* to-morrow. There ! (*giving the paper*). But, hark’ye, stuff the sea-weed well to the bottom ; I thought I heard the shaking of glass in that basket.”

“ Nothing, nothing, monsieur, on my word of honour !” protested one of the party, “ but two or three bottles of salt-water, a cure for Madame Dupuis at the Red Cross. Monsieur knows, perhaps, that Madame Dupuis’ legs are ——.”

“ Yes, yes,—very well,—I know it all. Be off ! Be off ! the moon is up, and I want my supper. Cazille, prepare that turbot for your mistress’s master-hand. You’ll find a fresh bottle of capers in my saddle bags.”

“ Adieu !” “ Good night !” “ Safe journey !”

\* The rich and commercial quarter of Bordeaux, lying near the river.

&c. &c. were bandied backwards and forwards ; and as the fishermen reloaded their little carts with the baskets, which they had placed in the house to shelter them from the rain, I thought the care with which they lifted them up denoted a cargo more brittle than flat fish, and more valuable than a couple of bottles of salt water.

I came at length under the eye of the inspector, who seemed for an instant disconcerted, but as soon recovered his swaggering mien. He examined me as keenly as if he had been going to strip the bark or lop the branches off a fir-tree. He next turned his looks towards the landlady and Cazille, and I saw that a stifled inquiry was lurking under his eyelid, and trembling on his tongue.

Fond of being first in the field, I addressed him, and proposed in civil terms that he would partake of my supper. A curl of contempt stole over his lip, as he exclaimed, “ Supper, \* \* \* \* ! And has *madame* then nothing better to give her guests than Spartan broth and water of the Tiber ? ”

The landlady was preparing her defence, but he cut her short with “ No excuse—not a word

—'tis infamous ! Cazille, place another cover at my table, \* \* \* \* ! must travellers be served in this way ? You have read the Greek and Roman histories, sir ?”

I bowed assent.

“ Well, sir, if you cannot sup with Apicius, you shall not fare like Lycurgus, depend on't. You are English, sir ?”

I replied that I *was* a subject of his Britannic Majesty.

“ So much the better,” replied he ; “ I love the English. Many a fat capon our king owes to yours. This is the time to stick to one's friends, \* \* \* \* ! and the king of England's subject shall sup to-night with the king of France's inspector of forests. Come along ! Make haste, madame ! Cazille, light us in !”

I promptly accepted the uncouth bidding. I thought the inspector was a precious morsel for such an appetite as mine ; and as I followed him down a narrow passage leading to an inner chamber, our ears were assailed with a storm of snoring, which it seemed utterly impossible to sleep through.

“ \* \* \* \* ! what do I hear ?” cried the in-



spector. "Is the thunder at work again, or is it your lazy slug-a-bed of a husband that thus outrages all decency? What ho! Batiste! awake, you brute!"

This obliging reveillée was speedily replied to by a hoarse and feeble voice, and by a bound upon the planks of a room above stairs, as if the sleeper had shot out of bed in sudden terror—as well he might.

A red night-cap quickly protruded itself from a door at the top of the stairs, and a red nose, projecting far from a thin, but rubricated visage, snuffled out a welcome, as imperfect as the exclamations of a troubled dream. At length we comprehended some such words as these. "Aha! Monsieur the inspector! Aha! I have been watching for you. I knew the steady-going trot of your horse; old *Trois-pied*'s hoof could not escape me. Ay, ay, I heard you humming your favourite air (singing).

L'on revient toujours

A ses premiers amours.

Aha! I knew we might look for you this fine moonlight night."

“Away, thou shadow of an impudent lie!” vociferated the inspector. “The trot of my horse, forsooth! I galloped at least three leagues through the forest, and came up at full speed to the house. Humming my favourite air, \* \* \* \* ! the wind was near forcing open my fast-closed mouth, and choking me with my own teeth! This moonlight night! The moon is shining now, ’tis true; but the moon is not falser than your flattery, nor the clouds it broke through thicker than your skull. Why, madame, why do you let the dog lie thus through storm and fair weather, soaking in his bed?”

“Alas! Monsieur the inspector, what else can I do with him? ’Tis the only place where he’s good for any thing.”

“And not for much there even, I’ll warrant it, \* \* \* \* !” cried the inspector.

The jest-proclaiming laugh burst out at this sally, and he paused for a moment for the echo. The fishermen were unluckily gone; I did not take the cue; the hostess thought the subject too serious for merriment; Cazille could only give a significant but silent smile;—so poor

Batiste, who knew the inspector's humour, was obliged himself to reverberate the laugh. Having forced out a drowsy titter, he disappeared ; and before we were seated in the inspector's room I heard him snoring away, as merrily as if he had not been aware of the interruption.

The chamber into which we were ushered was one of more comfort than was promised by the other parts of the house. It was low but spacious, boarded, and cleanly papered. Two beds, with white cotton hangings, filled a recess ; the furniture was neat, and a joyous blaze sprang up from the pine-wood faggots, which took fire like tinder.

A table had been placed for supper, by the quiet assiduity of Cazille ; and the difference which it presented to the one intended for me was striking. Every thing was of a finer and better order : the bread was white, the water filtered, and the arrangement had altogether an air of costliness in comparison with that which I had left. We seated ourselves by the fire, which even at that hot season was not unpleasant ; for the house lay low and damp, and the late torrents



had nearly set it afloat. We soon got into conversation on public topics, which, however, were speedily suspended for one of more immediate interest—the private history of my companion ; with every particular which he chose to reveal, of his birth, parentage, education, and adventures.

With not one of these details do I mean to gratify my inquisitive (or 'twere perhaps better said my curious) readers. It is enough to know that the narrator had been for many years a serjeant of hussars, and was now an inspector of forests. He had served, he told me, in many campaigns, from the sands of Egypt to the snows of Russia ; had been known to and noticed by all the marshals, and most of the generals ; had performed on many occasions prodigies of valour ; and, to crown the business, had received thirteen wounds, which all the surgeons had successively pronounced mortal, but none of which had proved so as yet.

Now my little knowledge of life has taught me, as a positive lesson, rarely to believe more than half what I hear ; and whenever I chance to light on a member of the Munchausen family, my

credulity diminishes again one half. In this case I should not perhaps have believed so much as the *fourth* of what was told me, had I not counted one scar on the inspector's forehead, one across his face, and saw that he was minus a finger from the left hand. That made fairly three wounds, which was the fourth of thirteen, all but a fraction, and that I made up by giving him credit for a spent ball, or some such slighter hurt in parts to me invisible.

I had thus satisfied myself that the inspector had fairly made out his title to that proportion of belief, which gave him the right of being regarded as a credible witness; and while I was occupied with the calculation, the supper was gradually appearing, under the auspices of the hostess and Cazille; the former more than fulfilling the promise of her first bill of fare.

I am here held in doubt between the desire of recording our excellent cheer, and the knowledge of the effect produced by leaving important incidents involved in mystery.—Well! I have decided the point to my own satisfaction, and I hope to that of my readers. I *will* describe the

supper, for I think the sin of amplification more venial than that of neglect.

First, then, came a soup of really good materials, known to the lovers of French cookery by the title *à la Julienne*, and only approached in Great Britain by Scotch broth, and that distantly indeed. A piece of *bouilli* flowing in tomata sauce, and a large melon with salt and pepper succeeded. A plate of Bordeaux oysters followed, and I am borne out by a work \*, well known to fame, in pronouncing them unrivalled. Next came mutton cutlets, dressed *à la maître d'hôtel*. Then the turbot, flooded with melted butter, and thickly strewn with capers. Next a brace of partridges stewed in cabbage, a favourite dish in these parts, and in high odour with the inspector. After that a capon richly stuffed with truffles ; then another plate of oysters ; then four ortolans, so fat, that they seemed to melt before the inspector's longing gaze. Next a large dish of custard, with a tart of raspberry, or currants, I forget which ; and finally a dessert of grapes, green figs, peaches, and Roquefort cheese ; with

\* Lord Blaney's Forced Tour.



a plate of *royans*, a little fish, not inferior nor less esteemed than sardignias. To moisten well this feast, were bottles of various kinds of wine of the country. During supper, Barsac and Sauterne; specimens of all the best growths of Medoc, from Lafitte to Léoville, with the desert; and after it a bumper of that luscious liqueur the sweet white wine of Bergerac.

When enough had been disposed of, of solid and liquid enjoyment, a cup of strong coffee, followed by a glass of Annisette, from the authentic and unadulterated still of Messrs. Roger, of Bordeaux, concluded our repast—on the merits of which it would not be becoming in me to pronounce any judgment.

Our conversation during the period thus occupied was short and pithy. The words were few, but well chosen, and seldom stretched to a sentence of greater length than “Excellent!” “Very good!” “Not bad!” “Another slice?” “Help yourself.” “Devilish hot!” and some others of the same tenor.

Two things surprised me in this supper. The excellence of the provisions, and the merit of the

cookery. But to relieve my readers' astonishment in much less time than my own was removed, I shall tell now that my hospitable entertainer had for his greatest failing, if it was one, a love of good living, which his situation allowed him amply to indulge; that he was in the constant habit of sending a stock of delicacies to this miserable inn, a day or two before his visits of inspection; and that the landlady had been established in the house, by his particular patronage, because of her talents in the arts of the kitchen, and for other reasons, which, being of a private nature, I am sure not one reader in a thousand would give a pin to know.

I had been hungry, and ate heartily; but before the prowess of the inspector my efforts were feeble indeed. Not one dish escaped his investigation; he drank in proportion; and at many intervals I saw him slip his hand under the napkin, which he had at the commencement carefully tucked under his chin. A short and convulsive snap followed each of these movements, which puzzled me much, until, on his throwing away his napkin, with the last change of plates, I per-

ceived his waistcoat unbuttoned and buttonless, from bottom to top ; and I easily divined that he had made successive but too dilatory efforts to relieve himself, by what is in the technical phrase of epicurean philoso—no, philology, called *letting out a reef*.

Being at length fairly freed from the labours of the table, and settled quietly to a bottle of exquisite claret, I turned my attention to what was after all my main object in this convivial *tête-à-tête*. I had not, for one moment, forgotten the mysterious and interesting stranger, who had so forcibly fixed my attention, and excited my curiosity. I had from prudence suspended my efforts to obtain information from the hostess or the fishermen, but was resolved to renew them, when the abrupt entrance of the inspector had stopped the development of my plans. After a little while, I thought that he himself might become the means of affording me the information for which I panted. Thus in our conversation before supper, I had endeavoured, from time to time, to lead him on to the subject of local concerns, but to every attempt of that kind



I had an evasive answer. If I spoke of the country we were in, he said he knew little of home, and that soldiers were more familiar with the field of battle than their native plains. If I mentioned any striking domestic event, he always quoted some cotemporary action,—Marengo, the Pyramids, Jena, Austerlitz, and so forth; and when I spoke of dates, it was always “yes, yes, I was then making the campaign of Germany—Portugal—Moscow—or some other.”

His loquacity and boasting always baffled me, and when Cazille had finally closed the door, leaving us to our claret, he burst out in a new but not less fluent ebullition.

“Well, sir, have you been able to sup?” I paid all due acknowledgment to the good fare.

“Well, well, I do believe that after all the disasters we have suffered, and with all our faults, the world will not deny us the glory of knowing what’s good, \* \* \* \* ! Ros-bif, bifteck, blom-poid-ing, and Woich-rabet\*, are all very well in their

\* Such is the orthography used by Mons. Beauvilliers, who would introduce roast beef, beef steak, plum pudding, and Welsh rabbit, to his countrymen.

way, \*\*\*\*! but when you put them beside a *petit pâté à la bechamel*, a dish of *carpe à la matelote*, a *tête de veau en tortue*—et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, \*\*\*\*! What a figure they cut! I'll tell you what, sir, your nation knows nothing of cookery. An Englishman in Paris is no better than a Scythian at Athens, \*\*\*\*! Sir, you eat your meat raw, and call that cookery! So does an American Indian, or an African negro. You despise the arts of the kitchen, \*\*\*\*! But you forget that Gallienus, though an emperor, was chiefly famed for his culinary knowledge;—and that Cadmus, the great-great-grandfather of Bacchus, and founder of Thebes, began his career by being cook to the king of Sidon! Do you know, sir, that to fulfil such an honourable station, 'tis not enough to have the finest constitution, the purest health, and your senses in the utmost perfection; but the brightest talents must be joined to knowledge the most profound? I don't speak, \*\*\*\*! of the dirty-work of your kitchen, I only show myself there to direct the action of the fire, and to see the effect of my operations, \*\*\*\*! Seated in an ad-

joining room, I give my orders, \*\*\*\*! which my subaltern workmen execute. I muse on the productions of nature, leaving them sometimes in their exquisite simplicity; again arranging and disguising them according to new proportions, and fitting them to flatter the palate. Do you wish, for example, a sucking pig, or a large piece of beef? I simply boil the one and roast the other! Must you have a well-dressed hare? If it is young, \*\*\*\*! it wants nothing but its merit to make it appear with distinction and honour.—I put it on the spit, and serve it up smoking hot! But it is in the depth of combination, \*\*\*\*! that my science is most sublime. Salt, pepper, oil, and vinegar ——.”

“ Hold, hold in mercy, my good sir,” cried I, astonishment, I am certain, stamped on my countenance, for it filled my brain. “ This burst of eloquence and erudition is too much for me. You could not have been more at home had you been yourself a cook.”

“ \*\*\*\*! What do you say, \*\*\*\*! A cook, \*\*\*\*!—I am a Frenchman, an officer, a man of honour, one of the inspectors of the royal



forests, highways, and bridges, \*\*\*\*! What do you mean? \*\*\*\*!”

At this tremendous explosion of indignant and irritated honour, my companion bounced up and thumped the table with his clenched fist, loud enough to alarm and bring in the landlady and Cazille, and sufficient to have awakened any one of the seven-sleepers—whose name was not Batiste. The glasses rung, and the decanters danced on the board. The hand that produced such powerful effects was next instinctively clapped upon the thigh, where fortunately the sabre was not; so the inspector had no remedy but to seize his glass, and wash down the imagined insult, which he had not the immediate means of wiping away in a more becoming manner.

The appearance of the hostess and her handmaid brought him to himself, and calmed in a moment the transports of offended feeling. Having paid this involuntary tribute of devotion to the influence of female charms, he ordered them to retire in a tone more fitting a high-priest than a votary. They obeyed the man-

date, and I, finding the moment favourable, quietly told him many civil things in explanation of what I had said. He received the atonement, and the matter dropped; and I, thinking the opportunity favourable, turned the conversation abruptly to the object of my chief solicitude.

“And pray, Monsieur the inspector,” said I, “is this large tract of desert solely inhabited by miserable shepherds and goat-herds?”

The inspector shook himself a moment, as if this sudden transition from sharp to flat had grated on his well-organised mind.

Recovering himself, he replied, “Eh! why! yes, \*\*\*\*! and much worse than shepherds and goat-herds, believe me. Why do I travel armed through these tracts, eh? Do you think I carry pistols and sabre for show? \*\*\*\*!”

“You fear robbers, then?” asked I.

“*Fear!* \*\*\*\*?” vociferated the inspector, “what’s fear? \*\*\*\*! I’ve often heard talk of fear, but never knew it yet.”

I explained away once more, and he was once more appeased.

“Yes,” replied he, to a less offensive way in

putting my former question; “yes, there are robbers here sometimes, but I never meet them. These fellows know their men, \*\*\*\*! But there are worse than robbers—refugees, revolutionists, republicans, \*\*\*\*! who plunge into these forests and escape the law. Had I my way with the scoundrels, I’d set fire to the pine woods, \*\*\*\*! and consume the rascals with pitch, tar, and resin—provided the king gave me another forest, \*\*\*\*!”

Here came in the laugh of acknowledged drolery, with which I was now familiar, and even inclined to join in to keep the inspector in good humour. I resumed the conversation.

“Have persons of any rank or importance found shelter here for political opinions?”

“Ay, that they have—and find it at this moment too. There is now, this very night, one man lurking in these deserts, whose head would pay for the trouble of arresting him, \*\*\*\*!”

“A tall man,” said I hastily, and without a moment’s thought, “in a Spanish cloak and fur cap?”

“He is a tall man certainly, but as for the



cloak and cap, they have little to do with his description. If you met him in that dress to-day, you might see him wrapped in a sheep-skin to-morrow, \*\*\*\*!"

"A handsome, dark, noble-looking man, about fifty?" was my next inquiry.

"Ay, all that," replied my companion. "He's handsome enough outside—but as gloomy as his complexion within. As for his nobility, it is all in his looks, \*\*\*\*! for he's no more noble than I am."

"I have met such a man," said I, recovering my caution. "What is the crime which forces him into these wilds?"

"I'll tell you that," said he; and I was prepared to listen with my whole attention, when we were both attracted towards the kitchen, by the noise of persons dismounting from their horses, and entering the house.

## CHAPTER III.

“Who the devil can this be at this hour of night?” cried the inspector “Hold, let’s listen a moment.”

I had my hand on the latch of the door, but he seized it as he spoke. In spite of myself, I did for this once, what must be, in any circumstances, considered an unworthy thing; and the instrument which compelled me, that was the inspector, did not rise in my estimation.

“Ah! madame, is it you?” cried the landlady.

“He is here! my dear father is here!” exclaimed, in a tone half questioning, half certain, one of the sweetest voices I had ever heard.

“Hush!” said the landlady; and a low whisper followed. I was more delighted at it than if I had heard a long and valuable secret. I fancied I saw in an instant through the whole

affair. The lovely inquirer, felt I (for something told me that tones so sweet must have proceeded from a beauteous instrument, and whatever it was which said so told no lie), the lovely inquirer, prompted by duty and affection, has wandered here through this drear desert, to meet her proscribed and virtuous father—for such a being could not reverence or hold communion with guilt. My presence drove the sufferer from his shelter; and this coarse inspector is one of those prowling wretches, which we are told all governments must employ, lying in wait to pounce upon his victim.

“Not now, at least,” said I, throwing aside his iron hand, which grasped my arm, flinging open the door, and running into the kitchen. A scream burst from the lady, who was young, and indeed most beautiful. The hostess and Cazille gazed on me with astonishment, mixed with alarm; and the inspector himself, who followed close upon me, did not know what to think of my abruptness;—and, for a moment, as he told me afterwards, returned upon me the compliment which my suspicions had affixed to him.



I advanced towards the lady, and was going to address her, God knows how ! when a young man, of distinguished deportment, rushed in, attracted from the stables, by the scream of his lovely wife ; and with fire in his eyes, which were fixed upon me and the inspector, and trembling tenderness in his accents, he called out, “ What’s this, dearest Stephanie ? what has happened ? ”

“ Nothing, nothing,” replied she, “ but this gentleman ——.”

“ What has he dared to do ? ” cried he, advancing fiercely towards me. I made some confused apology for my awkward intrusion, which I saw was received in rather a shy and suspicious way. I never made an explanation less to my own satisfaction, and was not surprised that it was so little to theirs. I got no reply, and retired a few paces, while the inspector advancing, addressed the stranger with humble familiarity, by a name which it is not necessary to mention here.

The young man received his address with infinite haughtiness, and a reproachful look, which

seemed to me to say, "you have betrayed us." The other made a nearer approach, and in a lower tone appeared to defend himself from the reproach of a connexion with me. I was little flattered by all this, and full as anxious as the inspector appeared, to cut the slender thread which bound our acquaintance.

Advancing, therefore, to the door, I looked out upon the desert, and thought that it would be for the common comfort of the whole party, if I trusted myself to the moonlight, and pursued the road to La Teste, which lay before the house. I strolled out, and by chance directed my steps towards the stable, a building larger than the house itself, and entering the open door, I saw by the light of a resin match, which burned in a distant corner, a man, in the act of arranging the clumsy cordage of a pair of oxen.

He came towards the door, and led them after him by the magic of some words in *Patois*, proved, by his tone and their compliance, to be soothing and affectionate. I wished the man "good night," and he repeated my salutation in French, which was at least understandable.

He was a comely young fellow, and of a civil demeanour. I asked him where he was going? He replied, "to La Teste." I proposed myself as his companion, and he readily consented. He proceeded forthwith to adjust his oxen, and yoke them to his little cart, which was loaded with packages, and covered with a canvas awning. I was inquisitive—he communicative: thus, while he got ready, I discovered that he was a carrier from the little town just mentioned, the only son of a poor widow woman, and now on his return from Bordeaux with a cargo of groceries and other matters for the La Testians. He finally informed me that he was in the constant habit of stopping at this half-way-house, for the purpose of reposing his oxen, and of refreshing himself—with draughts of wine or beer from the hostess's cellar, and draughts of love and hope from the reservoirs of Cazille's melting black eyes.

The preparations for departure were simple and soon completed. As I re-entered the inn to arrange my baggage, I heard the inspector assuring the lovely traveller, that he thought any sacrifice slight for the daughter of so worthy a



father, or the wife of so generous a benefactor. This speech was accompanied by many obsequious bows, as he lighted the lady and her husband to the chamber where we had supped, and which I took it for granted he had resigned to them.

They passed down the corridor accompanied by the hostess, who was loaded with a warming-pan, sheets, and pillows. As my eyes were fixed on the elegant figure of the lady, I saw her start and stop, while her head was turned in the direction of the flight of stairs formerly noticed. I was too far removed to hear the cause of her alarm; but a murmur of explanation, and a closing curse from the inspector, made it plain to me that the interruption was caused by the nasal salutation of poor Batiste, with a comment in the inspector's peculiar style.

I looked round the kitchen in search of Cazille, but she was not to be found; so, arranging the contents of my knapsack, which the fire had completely dried, taking my gun under my arm, and rousing Ranger from the corner where he reposed, I waited the return of the landlady,

and announced my intended departure with the carrier.

“Faith, you are right, my good sir,” said the hostess; “better repose in a carrier’s cart than lie in a hayloft, or sleep on a kitchen chair. I could have offered you no better accommodation. You see, monsieur the inspector has given up his room, and we have only one bed more, which he must occupy.”

I assured her that I was much better pleased to go on my journey, than interrupt the arrangements of so obliging a lady as she had proved herself to be; and I begged her to let me know how much I was indebted for the entertainment I had received.

“Indebted, sir? Nothing, to be sure. Didn’t you sup with monsieur the inspector?”

“Very true; but I have given a good deal of trouble, and then there’s the lodging and feeding the shepherds who guided me here, and to whom, no doubt, you have given beds and supper.”

“Bless you, sir! The poor fellows are long ere this at home. They paid me for the glass of

brandy they had on entering, and left the house before you had changed your wet shoes."

I protest I felt a blush, of a mixed and almost undefinable origin, overspread my face. Compunction for my own neglect of these honest creatures, shame at my unrewarded obligation to them, and pleasure at their disinterested conduct, were pretty nearly, I believe, the materials which composed the colouring of my cheek. I had nothing for it but to place a trifle in the hands of the landlady on their account; and she carried an air of honesty about her, so much in unison with what I have most commonly met regarding points of confidence and honour in people of *her class* in France, that I was certain my remittance would reach its destination.

"And now, madame, for your own trouble—"

"My dear sir, I am more than paid by this proof of trust,—but if your generosity prompts you to remember the girl—"

"I shall not forget her, believe me, nor her mistress neither: but where is she? I am anxious to set off, as I keep the carrier waiting."



“Rest tranquil, he is in no hurry,” replied the hostess, with a good humoured smile. “He also has a little account to settle for his evening’s entertainment, and Cazille and he are, no doubt, making up the reckoning.”

Being already in the secret, this intimation did not surprise me. As I was never disposed to interrupt the tottings up of love’s ledger, I quietly sat myself down on a chair beside the landlady, leaving Cazille and her lover to balance their account in their own way; and I have no doubt but that hope and happiness were placed at the *profit* side, while not even time was allowed to burthen the columns of *loss*.

“Your pretty house-maid has chosen well, madame.”

“Why yes, one must tell the truth. There is not in the department a better lad than Geoffroi the carrier. I believe he never did harm to man or beast but once, when he threw a bale of sugar on my poor man, who, in his haste to join Cazille, he overlooked taking his evening’s nap by the stable door.”

I had no time to ascertain whether this injury

to Batiste was cited as an exception to Geoffroi's good treatment to *man* or *beast*. The reader will therefore take it as he pleases.

“ But what retards the union of this young couple ?” asked I.

“ Faith, sir, but a trifle, after all. You must know, sir, that Geoffroi has the whole support of his aged mother on his hands, and, poor fellow, he is tightly put to it these hard times. He is just able to make both ends meet ; but, barring his cart and oxen, he has not a louis or a louis' worth. Cazille is one of the best lasses in the world, but she has but forty-eight francs a year wages ; and since the courtship began, about six months ago, has been able to save only the half of that towards defraying the cost of the wedding.”

“ Why, how much would those expenses amount to ?”

“ Oh ! sir, what with fees, and flowers, and favours ; and a white dress for the bride, and a treat for the friends, and paying the priest, it would take a good hundred francs besides what she has by her.”

“ But has she no friend who would advance her the money ?”

“ She has friends enough, but all people as poor as herself.”

“ Would not you, my amiable hostess, yourself give such a trifle for the happiness of so good a servant ?”

“ Why, to tell you the truth, I might, perhaps, if I chose to strain a point, afford a hundred francs, and it might be worse disposed of. But, my dear sir, if I were to give the money, and the girl got married, what would become of me? Where should I look for so faithful, so industrious, and so good tempered a lass in her place?”

There was so much *naïveté* and frankness in this avowal that it overpowered the displeasure rising up at the woman's selfishness. Instead of answering her, I asked myself a question.

“ Is it not hard,” thought I, “ that I am almost always thus thwarted when I wish to give people my *entire* esteem? That in the very moments when my heart is flattering itself with having found something *wholly* deserving its regard, an unlooked for flaw, or crack, or stain, presents



itself to my eye, and checks the current of my good will? But let it be so. I see it is our nature; and henceforward I will only look at the smooth portions of character, and step over the inequalities by which every individual disposition is defaced."

Then turning to the landlady and our subject. "But the inspector? Would not he be disposed to forward the good work?"

"Lord bless you, sir! not he. Not that I would speak ill of monsieur the inspector, for, in truth, I have no right. He has made my children, and my husband, and myself, what we are; and we owe every thing to him. But he has enough to do now with every sous, in buying dainties, without which he could not live."

There was much in this last speech that admitted of various constructions, according to different fancies. But it was no business of mine to examine closely as to what the inspector had made of my hostess or her spouse. I turned then boldly and abruptly to another topic.

"Surely," said I, "the gentleman whom I surprised here on my arrival, and his daughter,

who is now in the house, have ability and inclination to step forward in a case like this."

"Ay, that they have, good souls! and it is from them that Cazille's happiness will come at last."

"Is the name of that gentleman a secret?"

"It is no secret here, sir, and, unfortunately for himself, is too well known every where."

"Is it not strange, that a man so good, as I think he is, should find it a misfortune to be known, or feel concealment necessary?"

"Alas! sir," replied my landlady with a pensive tone, "how little does our happiness depend on our being known! The world always hears what is bad. A hundred virtues speak less loudly than one crime."

"But can such a man have committed a *crime*?"

"Which of us, my good sir, has not some failing, which society calls a fault, or has not done some deed which it looks upon as a crime?"

This tallied so well with my late reflections, that it threw me back a little upon myself, and I

paused for a reply. I saw that I was gaining fast on the landlady's confidence, and, expecting to be in a few minutes in possession of the grand secret, I forgot how precious time was in such conjunctures. I sought for an answer to the last observation, which might advance the progress of disclosure; but before I found one fitting, the hostess cried to me hastily, "For God's sake, go, sir! I hear monsieur the inspector preparing to leave the inner room. He must not see you with me alone. Adieu! sir. Here, Cazille! Cazille! give a kiss to Geoffroi, and come and warm the beds!"

This last part of her speech was uttered outside the door, where she had moved, leading me gently by the arm; and the commands thus given to Cazille were answered from the bench in the front of the house, by a smack which echoed loudly, and sounded to me as chaste as any kiss which ever sent up its music to the moon.

Cazille came towards us, her head reclining a little, and her eyes cast down. Geoffroi sprang



lightly on the seat of his cart, crying, "Come along, sir! Good night, madame! Adieu! dear Cazille! Adieu! adieu!"

I shook hands with the hostess. I did as much, but no more, by Cazille, and lightened myself of a little load of obligation for her services; but neither got rid of, nor wished to be rid of, my gratitude, for the smiling attentions with which they had been performed.

As I flung Ranger into the cart and stepped up myself, a word which had, I am positive, nothing cabalistic in it, for it was fairly and honestly pronounced, but which was to me incomprehensible, set the oxen in motion. The whispered inspiration of an Icelandic driver to his rein-deer could not have had a more animating effect. The oxen set off in a full and steady pace, slowly pulling away their master from the spot where all his affections were centred, and me from a place which had, during the last four hours, awakened much of my interest on more accounts than one.

It was just midnight when we started. Everything was hushed and still. Neither the wheels

of our little carriage nor the steps of our team were heard upon the sands. Geoffroi looked back a moment at the house, heaved a sigh, and sank into silence. It was then my turn to throw a parting glance at the scene of my late adventures, and I did so, more, I must acknowledge, from the common-place wish of fixing its appearance on my memory, than from any thing approaching the tender sentiments which my companion connected with it.

The landlady and Cazille had re-entered, as the reader will have inferred from Geoffroi's sigh, which had all the tone of parting love. The little building, its outhouses, hay-rick and garden, seemed all to sleep quietly in the shade of the tall pines; while the moon shone far and wide across the desert, and silvered the tops of the woods. Having made myself acquainted with the exterior appearance of the inn and its immediate vicinity, I turned round, and, affected by the taciturnity of my companion, I uttered not a word.

Nothing could be more beautifully calm than was the night. At one hand, as far as I could

see, before me, was a forest, and at the other an open waste, thick set with stunted fir-trees, which gave it an appearance of low brush-wood, and hid the sandy soil. Occasional clusters of sheep showed here and there a patch of dusky white, and the dull tinkling of a bell told that the flock was awake and browsing, while all around them was in deep repose. A wide cut drain marked at each side the boundary of the road, which was in this part quite straight, and very hard. It was generally smooth and safe, but the violent jolting in some parts made me examine it more closely, and I found that the causeway was formed of large pine-trees, thrown across and covered with layers of sand, and occasionally stones. It was, however, in very few places out of repair; and in half an hour we had entirely passed those uncomfortable spots. Affected not more by my previous fatigue than by the present monotony and the easy motion of the cart, I felt myself softly dropping asleep. I gave way to the gentle inclination, and reclining under the awning, and supported by the



packages, I soon forgot the world, its tumults, joys, and sorrows.

As I was dozing away, I heard Geoffroi exclaim, " Ah ! he sleeps. He has left no cares, no agitation, no mistress behind him ! I'll warrant it he is a happy fellow."

I felt a deep sigh rising from my breast, but I was resolved it should not have utterance ; while Geoffroi, influenced, perhaps, by somewhat of the same feeling, sprang lightly on the sand, and addressing a cheering word or two to his beasts trudged on beside them.

I slept soundly for, I should suppose, a couple of hours ; and was awakened by the rustling of branches against the awning which covered the cart. I started up, and looked out upon the narrow road which we travelled. At either side of us were trees thickly planted, the passage being scarcely sufficient to allow the breadth of our vehicle. The overhanging boughs struck from time to time against the awning, and no other sounds were to be heard, but the soft movements of the wheels rolling over the natural

carpet, which thick-strewn leaves, acorns, and fir-cones formed upon the sand. We were in the depths of a thick wood, not composed of pine-trees alone, but containing all the varieties of the forest. Instead of the tall and straight monotony of the unvarying fir; beech, ash, and oak-leaves glittered in the moon-beams, and flung their canopy across our path.

As we proceeded the passage became darker, whether from the greater thickness of the wood, or the temporary concealment of the moon, I could not judge; but the effect of the scene, which soon broke upon me, was considerably heightened by this increased obscurity. While nothing around was to be distinguished, at even arm's-length from me, and the oxen and their driver were quite lost to my sight, a sudden turn to the left brought us suddenly to a spacious opening, and presented a view which enchantment seemed to have conjured up.

The whole expanse of heaven, lighted by the full moon and studded with stars, shone brilliantly above; and all its splendour was reflected in the unruffled breast of a lake spreading wide before

me. The road, which ran straight along the bank of this liquid mirror, sloped smoothly to its side, and the feet of the oxen were, at times, washed by its waters. The forest by which it was skirted threw down its dark reflection, and a sighing breeze sometimes scattered loose leaves upon the surface, stirring it with fairy undulations.

I thought for an instant that I still slept, and that imagination had raised for me a mirage of unexampled loveliness. But as I grew convinced of the reality of the scene, I marvelled how such a lovely sheet of water could exist in this sandy waste ; and was some time moving along its side before I discovered that it was but a river, which narrowed as we advanced, and whose opposite bank I did not at first perceive, from the lowness of the road we travelled. The stream flowed on, in scarcely perceptible motion, nor was its beauty lessened by its decreased width ; for the opposite bank, being formed of a ledge of the purest and smoothest sand, shone in the moonlight like a frame of polished silver rising above the water. The dark edging of the forest formed



a fine contrast, and was at times thrown into deeper shade by passing clouds, which could not, however, prevent the moon from illumining the whole scene, and giving the more distant parts of it the full brightness of her rays.

Geoffroi was still walking, at the slow pace which suited the inclination of his oxen, and seemed in harmony also with his own frame of mind. A low murmured melody kept time with his sauntering progress; and I know not whether it was the peculiar softness of the scene or the sweetness of his mellow voice, but I think I never heard an air more tender, or warbled with a simpler grace. It was a tune quite in the style of those wild and heart-moving airs which make the traveller in Ireland so often stop and listen: then prompt him to look round at the desolate grandeur of the scenery and the rustic songster, and wonder how strains so exquisite had birth in so rude a land, or found expression from so rough a tongue.

The words of Geoffroi's song were Gascon. I have already avowed my ignorance of the particular dialect of that language used in those

parts, but still I caught here and there an occasional word, the meaning of which I knew.

Thus *cla dé lune* means moonlight; *pin*, pine-tree; *beoïtat*, beauty; *forêt*, forest; and *la vie*, life. And at the end of every cadence the name of names, Cazille, filled up the close.

I made meanings for the blanks, to please my own fancy, and stringing together some lines which suited the music, I found that I had almost inadvertently composed a series of extempore stanzas, which a less candid story-teller might have called a faithful and literal translation.

## SONG OF THE LANDES.

### I.

The moonlight, through the branching pines,  
Floats o'er the sands with silver streak;  
How like the chasten'd beam, that shines  
Through dark-fringed lids on beauty's cheek,  
When timid glances trembling steal  
From thy bright eyes, mine own Cazille!

### II.

As o'er the desert-stream's smooth breast  
The night-winds from the forest shed  
Light leaves to break the waters rest,  
It vibrates in its deepest bed.—  
So doth my thrilling bosom feel  
Thy soft-breathed words, mine own Cazille!

## III.

I see thee not, but thou art here !

Even as heaven's lamp, obscured awhile,  
Still lights the desert far and near,

Through sorrow's cloud thy mellow smile  
Makes life's dull waste bright spots reveal,  
And lights me on, mine own Cazille !

There were half a dozen stanzas more, pretty much in the same sing-song style ; but I forget half of them, and will not inflict the rest upon my readers.



## CHAPTER IV.

I WENT on contemplating and rhyming, while Geoffroi continued his strain, the mechanical cadence of which convinced me he was musing too, till I was roused by the dull and hollow sound of a horn, blown, as it seemed to me, on the opposite bank of the river, and echoing or answered in the wood beside me. The insinuations of the inspector rushed upon my mind, and I thought there were few more convenient places for rifling a poor traveller's knapsack, and levying contributions on his purse. But the reader will remark my forbearance, in saying nothing of the determined air with which I cocked my gun, nor the desperate resolution I formed, not to be robbed by less than six highwaymen at any rate.

I called out to Geoffroi (in whatever tone my

readers may severally fancy) to know what was meant by these sounds.

“Ah! sir, are you awake? Well, you have made a good sleep of it. Egad, I believe you had a lesson from the worthy slug-a-bed Batiste; but you are far from coming up to your master yet.”

I confess I did not like this evasion, and I repeated my question somewhat sharply.

“Why, lord! sir, are you afraid of robbers? Having got so far, you may make yourself easy on that head; for certainly the most convenient time to have cut yours or any other gentleman’s throat was while you were asleep in a dark wood we left behind us an hour back.”

Here he laughed—with good humour or malice, just as it may be, thought I—and though generally relishing a jest in my heart, I was seriously indisposed for this gaiety at present.

I do conscientiously believe that something about cocking the gun flashed on my brain; but if such valorous thoughts were preparing to rise, they were quickly put to rest by Geoffroi’s answer to my exclamation, that

“I *would* be satisfied, \* \* \* \* !”

Yes, reader ! shower down your reproaches like rain ! I do plead guilty to the whole line of asterisks ; but *magna veritas est*, &c.

I was just going to jump down on the road, when Geoffroi seized me by the leg, and in a supplicating tone entreated that “monsieur would not give himself the trouble *to make himself angry* (I like that idiom) ; that the sounds I heard proceeded only from the postboy rousing the watchman at the little bridge, which monsieur saw so close upon the water, a little higher up.”

I looked up, and did see the little bridge ; and in a moment more the sound of the horn came again upon the breeze, evidently from our side of the river, and in a little while more the crackling of a whip, and the gallop of a horse was heard, and presently the sand was flung up around us ; and then the postboy pulled up his little nag, and peeped under the awning, to see who was there, I suppose.

Geoffroi's oxen stopped, out of civility, I dare say, to the postboy's pony ; and the postboy him-



self dismounting, and moving up to Geoffroi, with the exact proportion of light and easy familiarity which a bearer of *billets-doux* should assume towards the carrier of parcels, he touched his white cotton nightcap, and then offered his hand.

“How do you do, my little fellow?” said Geoffroi, cordially shaking the proffered hand. “Why you are late to-night, Jean? What kept you back?”

I thought this address a little out of the line of separation which I wished to trace between the parties; but seeing that the spare boyish figure of the courier did not reach to Geoffroi’s shoulder, I set down the freedom of the latter to the score of seniority, which does and ought to level distinctions.

The postboy’s back was turned towards me, and I could not help moralizing a moment on the nature of his occupation, which so checks and distorts the human form. “What a pity it is,” thought I, “to see this poor little boy doomed for life to a drudgery of pitiful horsemanship, which already begins to stiffen his joints, and

shrivel up his limbs to the true horse-jockey standard !” And it was so, in fact, for his diminutive legs and thighs were flattened and bowed out by the friction of the saddle, so as to resemble a pair of old horse-shears, hollowed by constant wear. His large bony knees offered a resistance stronger than flesh and muscles, and were not yet reduced from their unnaturally disproportioned size. His long, tight, leather pantaloons were smooth-worn and polished, and, as he did not wear boots, they shone brightly in the moonlight, as he stood like a Lilliputian colossus, his legs involuntarily straggled open, and his arms akimbo. During my observations here detailed, he replied to Geoffroi’s question thus :

“ What kept me back ! What always keeps me back ? What has kept me back from the first, and will to the last, my good friend ? Why love ! Love, my boy ! But no matter—a pair of long spurs make up for lost time, and a merry heart mends a broken fortune.—Yes, I *am* late to-night ; but if that clumsy sack-of-meal of the wooden head \*,

\* I cannot well translate, or even explain, the postboy’s pun. *La Teste*, where the miller lived, is a corrupt, or,

Joseph Antoine François Xavier Dumoulin, the miller, had smoked his tenth cigar, and drunk his beer in better time, I should not have been kept so long waiting to wish his wife good night ! Now the secret's out, my boy ! Have you got any thing in your flacon ?”

“Always merry, always happy, always successful, my tight little Jean,” cried Geoffroi, coming to the cart in search of his brandy bottle.

As for me, I was almost stupified by the intolerable impudence of the little brat, who ventured to talk of intrigue with his squeaking voice, and boasted of a conquest the meaning of which he could scarcely know. What, then, was my surprise, as he turned towards me, looking for the expected dram, to see him raise his cap, and wipe with his handkerchief, a head, bald

perhaps, a civilized construction of *La tête de buche*, the proper name of the place, and by which the country people always call it. *Tête* (head) was in the old orthography written *Teste*. *De Buche* is the title of the noble family to which the town belonged ; and *Buche* means a log of wood. The reader must arrange all these combinations, and then turn the sentence into the most convenient way to make out the pleasantry.



as a barber's unwigged block, which he felt no shame in exposing to the heavens,—while he raised full upon me a visage which showed the chiseling of sixty summers at least !

“ Good God ! ” cried I, “ can all this be true ? Does this withered and worn-down abortion think of these things, and is there a miller's wife in all France ——.” But why bewilder myself or my readers, many of whom have, no doubt, like me, observed and wondered at the unaccountable freaks played by the fancies of women !

When the old sinner (for sinner he was either ways, true or false) had quaffed a glass of Geoffroi's brandy, he prepared to depart. He placed his cap upon his head, and tightening the straps which bound his cloth jacket to the pommel of his saddle—the warmth of the night inducing him to ride in his cotton vest—he gave a finishing tug to his single and fragile girth, and then sprang on his pony's back with wonderful agility for a person of his years, though not, perhaps, with the actual grace of Mercury or young Harry.

“Adieu, then ! my dear Geoffroi,” cried he ;  
“and what now for the black-eyed maid of the inn ? Have you scribbled no notes of your journey, at the rate of a line a league ? Ah ! curse your father and mother, you dog, who didn’t teach you to write faster.—Never mind, I’ll do the business for you. Half a score kisses on Cazille’s pouting lips shall be the token of your safety, and they will, moreover, keep me alive till I meet my little Marie, in the Place Dauphine at Bordeaux. Adieu, comrade ! Take care of yourself !”

“Farewell, my lad ! farewell ! But remember I trust to your honour,” holloed Geoffroi, with a laugh. The whip cracked—up flew the sand—away went the little courier, shouting “Love for ever ! Love for ever !” and in a minute or two more the horn gave notice that he was gaining on the road.

“Well, sir,” asked Geoffroi, after a long pause, “what do you think of that ?”

“Why I think, my friend, that you are a bold man, to trust your mistress in such dangerous hands.”

“Dear Cazille!” exclaimed he, and I thought he wiped a tear from his eye as he spoke, “Dear Cazille! I should be, indeed, an unworthy man, if I could not trust you where there *was* danger.”

“Have you no fears from this redoubtable fellow?” asked I.

“Poor soul! I only fear that yonder stumbling little pony will break his neck one night. He falls ten times a week, and it is well for little Jean that there is no *pavé* in the Landes.”

“Does he always go at full gallop?”

“Always, when there’s a chance of meeting any one.”

“But is his time really lost in the pursuits he boasts of?”

“God help the poor little creature! no, sir, to be sure. Why I’ve known him, over and over again, shiver for an hour, concealed in the wood, until he saw some one coming; and then steal out of it, as if he had a mighty affair on his hands. That’s pretty much the way he loses his time, I assure you.”

“Then you don’t believe a word of his boasting?”



“Who could believe the word of a boaster, my good sir? But tell me, sir, have you characters like this in England?”

“Why—really—perhaps—it is possible—that—there—may—be—by chance!—one or two—” replied I, and here the conversation dropped.

We reached in a few minutes the little rustic bridge, which, with the watchman’s thatched cottage, and a shed for the convenience of travellers, gave a romantic finish to the landscape. The watchman raised the barrier, and received his toll, when Geoffroi began to untackle his oxen, to whom he meant to give some hay and an hour’s rest.

I descended from the cart quite recovered from my fatigue. Geoffroi entered the shed, against one of the posts of which he stuck a resin taper, which he lighted at the watchman’s hut, and which threw its dull glare upon the river banks, where the moonbeams were so sweetly sleeping. Morning, too, was making rapid strides in the east, and the landscape was thus illumined by a combination of lights, such as a painter would have gazed on for its beauty and

difficulty. I strolled along the sandy edge of the stream, and looked round upon the exquisite scenery.

I do not think I overrated its beauty at the time, but I could not at all events exaggerate, did I venture to describe what I thought of it. After pacing up and down for some time, I at length lay down on the sand, and gave myself up to meditation.

I retraced hastily in my mind the scenes of the night; the varieties of character it had shown me; and the new interest with which they had inspired me. But foremost in all my ruminations was the mysterious stranger; and I lost myself in mazes of conjecture as to who and what he was. I thought of this man so long and so deeply, that I began to give credit to some of those wild theories, at which I had often laughed, of secret sympathies and spells—when I at length started in doubt of myself and all around me, at seeing this identical figure, standing at a short distance from me, by the water's edge.

A group of dwarf firs was between us, and

concealed me from his sight ; but as he stood bending over the river, profoundly buried in thought, I distinguished every feature of his expressive countenance, and I never beheld a finer picture of contemplative melancholy. While he thus stood for some minutes close to me, I felt at once the strongest wish to address him, and the utter impossibility of doing so ; but as he turned from the river, and walked slowly away, the spell seemed to quit me. I rose, and was preparing to follow him, when the rustling of my feet through the scrub-wood attracted his attention, and he turned quickly round. The moment he perceived me, he put his hand to his bosom, and I saw the hilt of a stiletto appear from under his cloak. I returned this menacing attitude by taking off my hat and bowing. He seemed a man of that sort which, in times of least preparation, can see the state of things at a glance ; and as I had disembarrassed myself of my gun, which I left in Geoffroi's cart, he divined at once that he had no hostility to apprehend from me. He therefore returned my salutation with easy pride.



“Sir,” said I, “I make you no apology, for I have not intentionally thrown myself upon your privacy. Chance has brought me to this spot; but I cannot omit the opportunity of thanking you for your kindness last night.”

“I am unwilling to suspect that you pursued me intentionally,” said he. “*Individuals* of your nation rarely lend themselves to unworthy deeds; but know, sir, that I am in need of secrecy, and *must* not be broken in upon.”

“I know it,” replied I, “and”—

“You *know* it! You know *me* then?” and here his hand was raised to grasp the weapon.

“No, sir,” cried I, “I know you not. In one word, you have nothing to fear from me. I am an utter stranger—an idle traveller—but fate seems to have thrown me in your way, and I am filled with interest for you. Mistake me not, then, but let me tell you that your daughter and her husband are at this moment in the inn where we met last night.”

“Indeed! Arrived already!—Sir, I thank you.—Pardon my suspicions and my rudeness—they are the effects of persecution, and not my nature.

I go this moment to meet my child—my dear, dear Stephanie!”

“Hold, I entreat you: there may be danger on your path. There is another person in the inn—a government agent—one who knows you, and whose servility to your daughter and her husband seems to assort ill with the tone in which he talks of you.”

At these words my companion paused; looked steadfastly on me; and seemed concentrating the whole powers of his penetration. He spoke.

“You say, sir, you know me not. How am I to reconcile these contradictions? You call yourself a mere stranger. Who is this agent, then, with whom you are so familiar? He has spoken of *me*. Who am I, then? Answer me!”

“Your surprise and your doubts are too natural to give me offence. I met the person I allude to by mere accident in the inn. He is inspector of these forests.”

“Oh! it is he? Poor fellow! he dare not harm me.—He has not betrayed my name?”

“No: I am totally ignorant of that;—but I fear, sir, it was interruption only that preserved

any secret of yours which may be in his keeping."

"Perhaps so—he is a babbling blockhead."

Then, after another pause, he advanced closer to me, and held forth his hand. "Yes, sir," said he, with warmth, as I took it in mine—"yes, I am convinced of your sincerity. The frankness of your manner makes it impossible to doubt you more. Be satisfied, too, that I am in no danger. The creature you mention is safe and useful. With all his blustering, he has some good in him, and his own interests bind him closely to mine. Now, sir, farewell. I fly to embrace my sweet child and her noble husband."

"But, sir, you must excuse me still. I cannot part with you, except on condition that, should we meet again, I may consider myself at liberty to address you not quite as a stranger."

"Willingly—most willingly. But it is little likely that we shall meet again. I am the sport of fate, proscription, and tyranny. You are free to walk the world at will. I am chained to these arid deserts as my only safety—and dare not quit them."



“Is it indeed, then, possible that such a man is a mark for vengeance and oppression? You have partly given me your confidence—you have gained my entire esteem. I am free, it is true, but not when an innocent and persecuted fellow-creature may want such humble aid as I can give him. Command me, then, every way, I entreat you—I am wholly at your service.”

I spoke this just as I felt it, and there was no chilling hesitation in my tone. Grasping my hand in both his, he replied with solemnity—

“Go not too far, young man, in your opinion of me. Be not rash in connecting yourself with me. The day may come, when you may turn your back on me, and shrink from seeing my face!”

“Impossible!” exclaimed I; “I can never turn from undeserved misfortune, nor from a face which is the mirror of a noble mind.”

“Mark me a moment,” said he. “You think me innocent. For half the years of my existence, I have borne upon my conscience the brand of guilt and infamy. Secret and deep it has gnawed into my heart, and under the laurels of

splendour and success has fixed these furrows on my brow. I am guilty of a great crime—ay, a heinous one! The private punishment has been ever with me, and now the public retribution is at hand.—It is but just too!—I dare not complain, and did the scourge fall fairly on me, I should meet it with a smile. But I am singled out—harassed—hunted down;—while those far guiltier—atrocious, blood-stained sycophants—are raised upon the ruins which have crushed me. It is that which drives me mad—that, too, which keeps me in this wretched world—for I would not deign to drag this chain of degradation, if it were not gilded by the bright hope of vengeance on those who have twined it round me!”

He seemed, at these words, worked up to a pitch of frenzied animation. He stopped abruptly; then took my hand again in his, and continued more calmly.

“But this is no place for such discourse. I have, indeed, no right to hold it with you at all. It is, however, soothing to me to repose upon one compassionate heart—and, if your interest

is excited for me, we may meet again. I am confined to the fastnesses of this desert for refuge; but there is amongst the woods on the sea-side, not far off, a little forsaken church. Near it I have secured a retreat, and in its vicinity you will be sure to find me. Any one at La Teste will direct you to the church of Archachon.—You may, probably, see me there this evening at sun-set—and if, on reflection, you will run the hazard, you may be, perhaps, of service to me. Now, sir, farewell for the present. I have no time for further delay.”

I assured him of my anxiety in his fate, and repeated my offers of assistance. We then parted. He advanced towards the bridge; and as he walked across it with an air like that of a sovereign prince rather than a refugee criminal, I saw the toll-taker and Geoffroi salute him with the most profound respect. While he proceeded on his way, they seemed to follow him with looks of sympathy and admiration. I advanced towards them, and heard the concluding observation of the toll-taker.

“ Ay, ay! I have taken tolls on this bridge



for the twenty years since he had it built, and I never knew man nor woman to pass it who didn't give him a blessing.—They may take every thing else from him, but they can't rob him of the good-will of the people.”

Geoffroi was about to reply, for he gave three or four consecutive pulls to the cuffs of his jacket, rubbed his hands together, and slapped his thigh with the energy preparative to real eloquence, when he observed me close to him, and checked his warmth. He took off his cap to me, and his example was followed by the toll-taker, in a style still more obsequious. They bowed to me over and over again; and I was not slow in perceiving that the civility which I had all along met with from the carrier was increased tenfold by my apparent intimacy with the stranger.

“ Well, Geoffroi,” asked I, “ are you ready to proceed ?”

“ In a moment, sir.—Do but let me have one look more at the count.”

“ The count? Does that gentleman bear so high a title?”

“ Ah ! sir, you may well say that now. They have taken his title, it is true, and doomed him to death ; but he is just as sure of the first, and as safe from the latter, as ever he was :—for we will all call him count, and he shall not die while the people of the Landes have strength in their arms, and blood in their veins !”

“ No,” echoed the toll-taker, “ sooner than they should catch him, I would, with my own hands, blow up this bridge to atoms—though each stone of it seems somehow as dear to me as my children, who have every one been born and reared upon its arches ! Yes, yes, he is safe enough at this side of the water ; but he hazards too much in trusting himself at the forest inn.”

“ Nay, nay,” replied Geoffroi, “ he has nothing to fear there but from that swaggering inspector, who, besides his obligations to the count, owes his present place to the son-in-law. Depend upon it he is too fond of a snug place and a sound skin to venture treachery.”

Then turning to me, he continued, “ God bless you, sir ! you brought good news, I am sure, from the countess, or madame Stephanie his daughter.

—See how quickly he walks through the heavy sand! Perhaps the appeal against the sentence is decided in his favour?”

“I fear, Geoffroi, that you overrate my intimacy with that gentleman and his affairs. I never saw him till last night—nor did I know his rank till you told me of it.”

“What, sir!” exclaimed the carrier, with strong emotion—“what! you don’t know him? My God, I have then betrayed him! What have I done! what have I done!”

“No, my good Geoffroi, you have nothing to reproach yourself with. Your error was quite natural, nor have you betrayed any thing. I know from himself that he is proscribed, and you have not let his name escape you.”

“Thank God I have not! But who could have thought, to see you together, that you were not old friends!”

“We *are* friends, you see—and when you know the world as well as I do, Geoffroi, you will know that new friends are often worth more than old ones.”

“Ah! my mother often told me so, true



enough, sir. Friendship, she says, is just like the shoeing of a cart-wheel—very tight and close fitting at first, but that it seems to wear out and slip away from one quite naturally, when rubbed a little on the rough causeways of hard fortune.”

“ Ay,” said the tollman, “ it is just like that little gate there, which flies wide open to the traveller that holds out money in his hand ; but remains close-barred and bolted to the poor devil who has not a sous to oil its hinges.—It’s a poor thing your old friendship !”

“ That it is,” said Geoffroi ; “ but yours, I hope, sir, for the count, isn’t of such fast wear.”

“ No, indeed, it is not, my friend. Be satisfied that I am sincere and warm in his interest ; but you must not tell me his name for all that.”

“ Never fear, sir, never fear. I have had too great a fright already not to keep my tongue closer tied in future. Look, sir ! There he goes, God bless him ! He has just turned into the wood.”

“ Safe journey to him, and to you too, gentlemen !” cried the tollman, wheeling into his hut.

“ Now then, sir,” said Geoffroi, “ when you like we are all ready to start.”

In a few minutes more we were in fact on the road, which, being firm and well kept, allowed me to walk without annoyance from the sand. Every step brought us further into a cultivated track. Large patches, at each side of us, were reclaimed from the desert, and grass and corn-fields, occasional comfortable houses, and plantations of forest trees, enlivened the scene.

The sun was risen, rich and proudly, as we came to the little town of La Teste. We proceeded at a lively pace down the neat street, and many a nod of welcome was shaken to Geoffroi from the rustic inhabitants, who stood at their doors gaily chattering, and all armed with a huge clasp-knife in one hand, and in the other a large slice of bread, well rubbed with garlic, and eked out with a green fig or a bunch of grapes. Such is the common summer breakfast of these parts. We stopped at a little cottage near the centre

of the town, where Geoffroi was received with a truly maternal embrace by its decent-looking mistress. I was presented to her in due form by her kind-hearted son; and her particular attentions led me to believe that in his whisper, on our arrival, he had connected my name in some way with that of the stranger—or of the count, if the reader will concede him his title.

I declined, however, entering the cottage, being anxious to take up my quarters in the neighbouring white-washed house, decorated with the sign and title of “the French Crown;” which, meaning merely a piece of money so called, must not be confounded with the regal ornament attaching to the occupier of another residence. Thither, then, as soon as Geoffroi had put up his oxen, I repaired; and Ranger, my gun, and knapsack, very soon occupied their usual places in my chamber. When I had shaken off the dust and other encumbrances of my twenty-four hours’ journey, I had a breakfast of *café au lait*, and then sallied out on my task of observation.



## CHAPTER V.

THE district of Arcachon, including the little town of La Teste, its capital, is probably one of the most perfect retirements in any part of civilized Europe. Standing on the remote and uncultured border of the Bay of Biscay, it is utterly out of the way of communication with the world ; and its name is never heard beyond the edges of the forest which surrounds it, except when a maritime report is given of some unhappy vessel beat to pieces by the breakers, which are eternally lashing the desolate sands of its beach. La Teste is very rarely ornamented with the appearance of a stranger : the unbroken intercourse of its inhabitants with one another gives them that sameness of thought and similarity of expression, which is remarked so often between man and wife, sufficiently unfashionable to live much together. Their views, both physical and moral, may be said to be

bounded on three sides by desert, and on the fourth by the wide-stretching sea. They are either fishermen, or dealers in the products of the pine-woods; and a few leagues, by land or water, seem the limits of their intelligence. The aspect of the place is wild and flat, yet not unpleasing. At that period of the day when the tide is full in, it is delightful to gaze on the placid lake of Arcachon, for such is the name of the horse-shoe excavation, on the deepest ridge of which the town is built. But when the waves recede, and for three miles out nothing is to be seen but a sedgy exposure, it is not easy to imagine a more unattractive landscape. It has none of the sublimities of ocean, for the great Biscayan Gulf is too far out to be visible from this part of the shore. There is, however, one remarkable feature in the prospect, which is not without beauty—the accumulation of those sand-heaps far to the right of the lake, which shine in the sunbeams with a dazzling brilliancy, and for a parallel to which we must travel to another portion of the globe. On the left stretches a thick forest, close up to

which the waves reach at high tide, when a long circuit must be taken to approach it; but the strand at low water is quite uncovered, and permits those who love the shady solitudes of the wood to reach them by a walk of about half a league.

This wood was the chief object of my research; for I made myself informed that the church of Arcachon stood buried in its shelter, not far off. Having lounged away some hours in the immediate neighbourhood of the town, and in taking some rapid notes of the preceding day's adventures, I ordered my own and Ranger's dinner, that I might lose no time in commencing my excursion, and advancing towards the interesting interview which I looked for at sunset. My homely, ill-dressed, unpalatable meal, was a practical eulogy on the last evening's repast; and as I bethought me of the inspector's luxuries, I hoped, for his sake, that the duties of his office never led him to the unseemly accommodations of "L'Ecu de France."

When I found myself on the borders of the



forest, I felt an anxiety which, like all anxieties, was of a mixed nature. Doubt of the stranger's meeting me, interest in his fate, curiosity in his secret, vague and awful conjectures at the nature of his crime, all tended to fill me with a restless impatience. I pondered, and moved onwards along the edge of the sea, without observing any thing to intimate the existence of the church in question. As I proceeded, the broad expanse of the ocean grew upon my sight, and I experienced all those sensations with which it ever inspires me. Its vastness, its measured motion, and the murmuring of its soft waves, as they seemed to melt into the sand, all spoke to me in different ways ; but, as it were, in the varying modulation of a common language. I hastened my steps to meet the approaching tide, and was soon standing close to the snowy wreaths, which every wave deposited, like an offering, at my feet. I had laid my gun among some scattered rocks behind me, and Ranger took the opportunity of stretching himself in sleep beside it. I was a long time gazing on the waters, as they floated in

their self-impelled and waltz-like undulations. There was nothing visible on their bright blue bosom. No ship was in sight ; and a few white seabirds, skimming along, were the only living objects which appeared to dispute my quiet sovereignty over this beauteous scene.

At some distance from the shore stood a low and rudely constructed fort, the apparent remains of a larger work of defence. It seemed ungarrisoned ; and I should have thought it uninhabitable, had not some thin curling smoke risen from it, and pronounced it to be a signal station, or the refuge of some poor fisherman, living there on sufferance. This lonely mark of the labours of man, in a scene otherwise the exclusive work of nature, gained an importance from its singleness, and fixed my attention. There was something picturesque in its crumbling angles and weed-covered embrasures, which tempted me to record it, in the rough and hasty way in which my pencil usually performed such duties. I took out my book and began to sketch ; but had scarcely traced the first rude outline, when I received a blow from

behind, full on the ear ; and before I had time to stagger forward, a pair of lusty arms were wound round me, pinioning mine to my sides, while a chorus of triumphant but hideous shouts nearly deafened me to the violent barking of Ranger, who had flown to my defence.

I struggled with all my might ; and turning round my head, saw a face resting on my shoulder, which no natural sign proclaimed as woman's, but which was marked as such by the decoration of a cap like those worn by the peasants of the country.

The large black eyes and open mouth which met my view seemed strained beyond all imaginable dimensions, by the exertions which she made to hold me fast. I plunged and struggled with all my energies, she shouting " Pierre ! Pierre ! Pierre !" with a voice of terrible sound ; while a little amphibious-looking monster, something between a fish and a boy, was coiling a huge net round my entangled feet, and shrilly echoing the screams of my assailant.

We were up to our ankles in the water, which flowed fast upon us, and the contest



ended in a few seconds by our all three tumbling down into a frothy wave, which rolled over as we sank into the sand. She never let go her hold for a moment, but I had loosened one arm, and, grasping her by the leg which was next it, was gradually getting the mastery, when another figure, still more formidable, came to her succour. This was a man of most ferocious aspect, and in the fierce costume of military service. He had but one arm, which brandished a sabre over my head, and under his stump was my fowling-piece, both barrels pointed full in my face. He roared out to me, in French, a summons to surrender, with a horrible threat of cutting off my head, clear and clean, in case of refusal. My assent was a matter of course ; but when he ordered me to stand up, obedience was not so easy. The young imp kept twisting the net faster and faster around me ; and the woman proclaimed, by her yells, that she was entangled as firmly as I. I do not know how we got clear, but by simultaneous rollings up the sand, well washed by the waves and wreathed round with sea-

weed, we at last got beyond the reach of the water, and in a little time were on our legs. The woman, whose masculine voice and aspect were truly terrible, snatched the sabre from the hand of her associate, and never ceased vociferating, in her jargon, abuse, I suppose, to me and commands to him. He and I had a short parley together, as he stood with my gun cocked in his hand, the barrel resting upon his stump, after the manner of an American rifleman, the muzzle close to my breast. He told me pithily that I was a spy, and a prisoner, and that I should not, on pain of instant death, make any resistance to accompanying him and his wife to La Teste, to be handed into the keeping of the mayor.

I must confess that no prisoner, I believe, ever felt greater pleasure at a release, than I did at this threat of trial; for the outrage I had suffered, and the appearance of its perpetrators, promised any thing but legal and legitimate consequences. I expressed my readiness, and so we set off. The little urchin, following, as I suppose, the orders of his father, waded

away towards the ruined fort, of which I quickly understood the latter was governor. The tender helpmate of this veteran now carefully picked up the sketch-book, and began to wipe the water from its leaves, in which operation, to my utter misery, she scoured out the traces of many an hour's labour. I remonstrated, but in vain. French was Greek to her; and she was but little inclined to accommodate my wishes, even if she had comprehended them. We walked on: this marine Amazon in front, throwing fierce defiance over her shoulder at every step; Ranger sneaking beside me, his tail between his legs; and the old soldier hobbling after, with the gun in its unvarying attitude of hostility and preparation.

The leader of the procession sturdily proceeded at a pace which the rear-guard found it hard to keep up with; and the tide now flowing rapidly up to the bank of sand which the waves had raised along the whole course of the bay, we struck into a little opening in the wood on our right. On this manœuvre a halt was commanded by the soldier; and a short council



seemed to be held on the propriety of our taking to the forest, as I judged by their gestures. It was decided that we should do so ; and indeed the only alternative appeared to be an attempt to wade through the sea to La Teste, a hazardous, if not impossible, proceeding.

Our narrow path was now obstructed, by branches above, and brambles below ; and in addition to the risk of one of these catching in the triggers of my gun, and so executing me on the spot, was the possibility of my tripping up ; on which they might put the construction of an attempted escape, and found a fair excuse for decapitating me or blowing my brains out—or both. In this way I seriously began to calculate the prudence and possibility of bolting and giving the slip to my escort. But the sea was at one side, and a tangled wood at the other ; and I considered that, if even I succeeded in escaping, it would only involve me in difficulties, and mar the meeting with the stranger ; while by my making my appearance before the mayor of La Teste, with Geoffroi and my passport to

testify for me, there could be no doubt of my release. I therefore cautiously trudged along; and becoming more accustomed to my situation, I began to perceive how much of the ludicrous it contained.

While my conductors kept up an unceasing chatter in their (to me unintelligible) *patois*, I was running through every link of a chain of thought connected with my adventure; which ended in the rather awkward reflection, that some officious subaltern might implicate me as an associate of the proscribed, and for ought I knew, guilty refugee. I was turning in my head a variety of ways for baffling such imputation, when the path we traversed opened out upon a little inclosure of most verdant herbage, and on raising my eyes, I discovered the identical church of Arcachon standing before me.

I stopped for a moment in unfeigned admiration. My conductors stopped also, for the soldier was fatigued by his forest walk, and the woman obeyed the orders to halt. "Great God!" thought I, "if thou wert always worshipped in the purity which such a temple and

such a solitude as these must inspire, how much worthier would thy votaries be to call upon thy name !”

This beautiful little structure, a chaste model of Grecian architecture, was erected at the expense of the crew and owners of a ship which was wrecked on the shores of the bay; and, being out of the direct resort of the inhabitants of La Teste, is known by the name of “The Sailors’ Chapel.” A priest was formerly retained, at a regular stipend, to perform duty in it; and a neat cottage, at the extremity of the grass-plot in front of the church, was his secluded and modest residence. At this time, however, the house was vacant and the church deserted, except on the anniversary of its patron saint, or when occasional offerings were put up, by crews escaped from the dangers of the sea, or others on the point of embarking to meet them.

I acquired all this knowledge from the fluent communications of the one-armed soldier, who, finding me very tractable, entered warmly into the interest which the church inspired me with,



and answered many more inquiries than those which led to the information above detailed \*. The woman, however, less conciliating, and not understanding our discourse, showed signs of impatience, and indulged in some flourishes of rhetoric as well as of the sabre. "March!" was once more the word, and we plunged deep into the embowering branches of the wood.

It was now nearly sunset. I thought of the stranger, and hoped no ill had befallen him. The path was narrow; and as we walked on I could see nothing before me but the stiff cap, broad back, thick legs, and brawny arms of my female escort; until she came suddenly to a full stop, and, with gesticulation worthy of Grimaldi in one of his feminine metamorphoses, she commenced a rapid succession of low curtesies to some one advancing towards us. In the momentary depressions of her head, which bobbed up and down with incalculable vivacity, I was enabled to see beyond it, and discovered, with pleasure and mortification, the exiled wan-

\* See note at the end.

derer, his daughter and son-in-law, standing in a group before us.

When they caught the eye of the old soldier, he stepped up towards them; and with all the grace which his mutilated frame permitted, he presented arms, standing stiff and erect beside me. Astonishment was in the face of the young man; fear in the charming features of his wife; while the father, casting on me and my companions a piercing glance, showed a countenance on which suspicion, the twin associate of guilt, was in full display.

There was, it must be confessed, something to warrant a fear of bad faith, in the hostile appearance of my companions, in the waylaying air of our rencontre, at the very time and place which the stranger had fixed on to meet me, but still more in the mixed expression of my look; which might, by a doubting mind, have been well supposed that of a rascally police agent, rejoiced at having entrapped his victim, yet cowardly enough to be ashamed of his vocation.

But the exile was still himself. He never

flinched from the path, but addressed the saluting veteran. "Why, how now, Pierre! What's this?" Then looking towards me. "And you, sir—How am I to salute you, friend or foe?"

"Oh! as neither one nor the other," replied I; "I am too shabbily placed for the first, and too harmless for the last. I am nothing now, but a positive prisoner and a suspected spy."

A prisoner and a spy! Why, Pierre, I hope you have not committed another outrage in your capacity of signal-man. You have not used this gentleman ill?"

"Ill! bless your heart, sir, quite the contrary. Except for that wet jacket, which he got in rolling on the beach with my poor Josephine here, I never granted quarter to a prisoner who was better treated."

"But how comes it that you have dared to make prisoner a stranger and a traveller of such peaceable demeanor?"

It would be rather a puzzling matter to give a literal version of Pierre's reply; but if my reader will make allowance for foreign idiom



and blustering, and imagine the old soldier to have been a Chelsea pensioner, recounting the capture of a musing Frenchman near a Martello tower on our coast, the following may be considered a free translation :

“ Why, please your honour ! as to *daring*, you see as how I never was backward in that, and when a chap of a foreigner skulks along the wood near my signal-post, I thinks it my duty to take him into custody, without paying compliments. Your honour knows as I keeps a sharp look out both by sea and land ; and as no English frigates were to be seen in the bay this morning, something told me as how that something was brewing ashore. It is peace time, to be sure, but that signifies nothing ; for we make peace and break it now, as often as we change kings and emperors (touching his hat), and it is in peace that spies are most dangerous, for such folk rarely venture to show themselves in war. Well, please your honour, as I was saying, I had just twisted the telescope round, and turned its muzzle towards La Teste, and was pretty constantly clapping my eye to

the touch-hole, as a body might say, when all of a sudden I marks a man stealing quietly along down the side of the wood. With that I points the gun, the glass I mean, plump upon him; and his knapsack, foraging cap, green jacket, and brown barrelled piece, made me dead sure as he was a rifleman scattering out from a party coming to surprise the fort. Well, I calls Josephine and little Nicolas and myself together, to hold a bit of a council, and we takes another peep at the lad as he sloped down towards us. We sees at once, by his fair complexion, fresh colour, and close-shaved chops, that he was an Englishman; so taking my sabre in my hand, and loading my wife and child with the large mackarel net, we makes a quiet sortie out of the fort, and places ourselves in the wood hard by. Well, at last up comes the enemy, and we sees him halt and take up a position just in front of the fort; when thinking, no doubt, that it was abandoned, and nobody near, he lays his musquet on a rock close by the shore, and plants his dog, which is prisoner also you see, as sentry upon it. If

any more proof was wanting, your honour, what does he do, but pulls out a book and begins taking a view of the fort, which made me certain that he was nothing but a shabby bit of a spy, and no scout nor rifleman after all. So seeing as the dog was asleep on his post, we steps out all three to seize the man, and Josephine and Nicolas, being lighter-footed than myself, they soon comes up with him; and what with her arms, and his net, he was soon seized, as fast as the tall German general which your honour and myself made prisoner at Austerlitz. 'That's all, your honour.'

When this recital was finished, the stranger frowned sternly, and cried, "Hark ye, Pierre! Your officious conduct will surely be your ruin. Remember that you have now no friend to screen your excesses. Return his gun to that gentleman, and think yourself well off if he pardons your outrages."

I took the proffered gun, thanked the stranger, smiled on Pierre; and marvelled how a banished refugee maintained such influence over a whole district, every individual of which



seemed to know his situation, yet admit his power.

Pierre turned with a scowling, discontented look, to his wife, who had never ceased to bob curtesies from the moment of our meeting the stranger. He addressed her in *Patois*, and seemed to inform her of the rebuke which he had received, for she flung a surly glance upon the party, and turned off abruptly towards the church. Pierre muttered a few sentences in a confused mixture of French and Gascon, and then took his leave with the following speech :

“ You were always hard on me, general, always. You call every thing I do excess. What if I did seize the old priest, who was reading his prayer-book by the wood side ; or the philosopher, who was gathering shells and what not for the Bordeaux museum ? Had I not good reason for thinking that the one was taking notes of some plan for surprising the fort ; and the other sounding the depth of the bay with his boat-load of instruments ! What am I there for but to look sharp at all comers, and what is a priest or a philosopher to me,

more than any other foe to fair play and plain dealing? But don't look angry, general. You know I'd die twenty times sooner than offend you! God bless you, and prosper you always, and every where! Adieu, gentlemen and madame!" With these words he limped away after his discomfited helpmate.

The stranger, then, took me by the hand, saying in a kind tone, "You have not to boast, sir, of the hospitality or politeness of our country. Suspicion and ill-treatment have pursued and fallen upon you, but you will excuse rude manners and troublesome times. Stephanie and Eugene! receive this gentleman with that consideration which only may atone for your last night's surmises."

The lady and her husband each offered me a hand, which I cordially accepted; and some words passed, common-place in their nature, but on which circumstances stamped a more than common value. During the discourse of Pierre, I had closely observed the interesting group, and saw enough to tell me they were in

deep distress. Her eyes were red and swollen, and her cheeks pale. Her husband's countenance bore marks of great agitation. The father alone seemed composed in the midst of the grief which his situation had excited. After the interchange of the civilities just mentioned, I prepared to take my leave; but on my doing so, the stranger said—"No, no, sir, you must not part from us so. I see the delicacy which actuates you, but your company is a solace to us at this moment; and although the intelligence brought me by my children precludes the possibility of your serving me, you may not, perhaps, dislike to pass with me the last evening I shall ever see in my native country. Yes, sir! I am now denounced to certain death, if discovered in the land that owes me no trifling gratitude. The last hope for justice lay in an appeal, which has been rejected; and those who have confirmed the sentence of my destruction now pant for the means of inflicting it upon me; but I shall thwart them all!—and I may yet return, when least they think of it, to act such



part as has ere now been performed, and wipe my injuries out.—But no matter! Excuse me.—”

He here grasped the arm of his son-in-law, and they walked forwards at a hurried pace, deeply conversing; while I, thus left to take charge of the weeping daughter, offered her the support of my arm, and closely followed their steps.

As soon as her sobs allowed her to speak, she exclaimed, in a voice of the most touching sweetness, “ Ah! sir, is it not dreadful to see such a being as that—the best, the kindest, the bravest of men, thus driven from the country he has loved so much, and served so well? He whose whole life, as long as my memory can trace it, has been devoted to public services and private virtues; and whose only reproach has been, that in days of passionate enthusiasm he committed one act which in him is called a crime, while his judges and persecutors are the very men who urged, and some of whom participated in the deed. Such, sir, is the justice—

such the impartiality of our rulers! Is it not dreadful?"

"It is, indeed, afflicting," replied I, "to see the instances of wrong inevitable in times of public commotion. But your father has the hope of pardon left him, as he seems secure of escaping from his immediate danger!"

"Escaping! Alas! alas! and must he fly as a criminal from the shores which have so often hailed him with shouts of triumph—from the people who have so long enrolled his name with the band of heroes unrivalled in ages of glory! Yes, yes, he must fly; and this night is the last in which I shall gaze on him, perhaps, for ever!" Her sobs interrupted her, and I offered no reply.

We had by this time reached the church, on the green lawn in front of which the stranger and his son-in-law were pacing up and down, with papers in their hands, which seemed wholly to absorb them. Unwilling to interrupt them, and hoping to gain on the confidence of my lovely companion, I led her towards the

church, and we walked silently awhile under its classic portico.

There was something oppressively solemn in the scene, yet I felt as if I would not have changed it for one of life's lightest. As I contemplated the figures, with whose sorrows I had thus become associated, and while thousands of varying imaginings rushed upon me, I was astonished by the distant sound of vocal music. The lady and I stopped at the same moment, and I asked her, "Did you hear that strain?"

She answered me by suffocating sobs.

After a short interval, the sounds came again, nearer and more plainly. At this repetition of them, the stranger and his son-in-law paused suddenly in their discourse, and the former stepped quickly towards the clergyman's cottage and unlocked the door, which, taking out the key, he entered and locked after him. The husband came up towards us, and, having spoken a few words to his wife in an undertone, requested me to take charge of her for awhile. I willingly undertook the office, and



he stepped across the grass-plat, and knocked at the cottage door. It was opened; he entered, and the windows being all closely shut, there was no appearance of the house being so tenanted.

The sounds of the chorus became now more distinct, and more continuous as they approached. It was evidently a religious song, and chanted by a choir of not unpractised singers. It harmonized well with all that was passing, and threw a soothing melancholy over the sensations I had experienced. Not so with my lovely companion. As the voices came more fully towards us, her agitation increased; and my surprise was soon changed to painful sympathy, when she whispered me, in snatched and almost inaudible sentences, that the music proceeded from the rustic choristers of La Teste, accompanying a procession of sailors, who came, as was the custom, to offer up their prayers before embarking with the night tide, in the little vessel which was to bear her father from his country and friends. Having thus

explained the cause of her emotion, she drew her cloak around her, and leaned on my arm to witness the scene.

A verger first approached, and opened the door, and was followed by some children carrying baskets of flowers, which they scattered on their path. The singers, male and female, habited in white surplices, next came on, and then the priest advanced with measured steps. He was followed by the sailors, amounting to about ten or a dozen; each one carrying a taper, and most of them bearing some simple *ex voto*, such as a bit of cable, a rude daubing of a ship, or other similar offerings. A large party of peasants and inhabitants of the town closed the procession. It entered the church: we followed, and, as we stood leaning against a pillar, I had full leisure to admire the beautifully ornamented altar, the richly carved organ and pulpit, and the windows of stained glass, shining with a mellow richness, as the setting sun poured its full splendor through them. The religious service was soon performed; and that part of it which by its simplicity pleased and interested

me most was the repetition of the sailors' parting hymn.

## HYMN TO THE VIRGIN\*.

### I.

O virgin queen of Heaven,  
To whom we raise our prayer,  
Thy presence cheers the exile's fears,  
And calms the perils that we dare !  
Let but thy murmur'd blessing breathe  
Across the distant tide,  
'T will smooth those waves the hero braves,  
Whose bark we go to guide.

### II.

For stranger-seas we're bound,  
Which wash the savage shore,  
Where wild winds sweep, in chorus deep,  
To swell the billows' frantic roar.  
Send, then, a seraph from on high,  
To fan with radiant wing  
Our fluttering sails, while gentle gales  
Waft thee the praise we sing.

\* These lines were written for music, not yet published. The allusion in the last stanza is explained in the note which follows this tale.



## III.

Our angel-guide shall beam  
Like that celestial form  
Whose wings of gold, in times of old,  
Hush'd on this strand the angry storm ;  
And to our sainted patron gave,  
In token of thy love,  
That Heaven-wrought gift man may not lift,  
Nor Hell have power to move.

During this hymn, the emotion of the afflicted daughter increased to a violent degree, and at its conclusion she yielded to the movement with which I led her out. In every eye that gazed on her, as we passed down the aisle, I plainly discovered compassion and sympathy, but no one seemed to recognize her ; and I thought these feelings were awakened by simple motives of charity for its own sake, without being dependent on any personal excitement. But when we got into the open air, which breathed freshness and relief to my companion, she informed me that every one of the congregation within knew perfectly who she was ; but not one would give utterance even to the blessings

which they silently poured on her, fearing to add to her distress by any public display. Who would exchange the consolation of such eloquent silence for the heartless and indelicate condolence of the world !

We walked apart, while the assembly left the church, and dispersed in irregular groups through the wood. When the doors were closed, and no one to be seen, the lady advanced to the cottage, and tapped gently at the window. The signal was answered by the appearance of her father and husband, who both offered me their thanks for having accompanied her during the ceremony, which they had thought it imprudent to witness. “For even here, sir,” said the exile, “has the spirit of corruption spread itself; and my being publicly discovered might bring down the strong arm of persecution on the whole of this district, whose devotion to me is well known. I am prudent, for their and my family’s sake—but on my own account indifferent.—Now,” continued he, “we must go on towards the town. The little bark which my friends have engaged to convey me to another

shore lies riding at the mouth of the bay, and at high-water a boat is to be in readiness on the beach. The sand-heaps scarcely show the red tinge of the sinking sun. We have no time to lose. Stephanie, my love, retain that gentleman's arm: Eugene and I have much to talk of yet—and at supper we shall have leisure for our leave-taking.—Come on !”

The assumed cheerfulness with which he spoke did not conceal from me the melancholy of the speaker, nor produce the effect he wished for on his daughter. We walked onwards according to the arrangement he had made, and for a few minutes no words were exchanged. But there is something in the French heart that must have vent, whether in joy or sorrow. The first is increased, and the latter seems diminished, by communication; and if sympathy is discovered in the listener, his being a stranger is no obstacle to the confidence.—My fair companion soon, therefore, sought the solace most natural to her sex and nation, and she freely told me, as we walked towards La Teste, much of the secret of her father's situation. On two



points, however, she observed a caution, which I did not feel at all inclined to remove. She neither mentioned his name, nor the nature of that crime which had called forth his banishment and remorse. The first, she said, she dared not reveal until he was safe from the possibility of detection or betrayal. The latter she could not venture to tell me, lest my national or private prejudices might destroy the sympathy which had been so forcibly excited in her father's favour. I participated in her precaution on both points, and guardedly avoided any expression that might lead to the knowledge of one secret, which must almost necessarily have carried with it that of the other. The fear of learning that the stranger had been guilty of some really serious crime made me shudder. I was not much of a politician, and had great leniency for state offences, which often sprung, I knew, from private virtues. I hoped that the crime of the stranger was of this nature, until I recollected his self-upbraidings; and then the memory of d'Enghien, Wright, Palm, and Pichegru, flashed all together across my mind.—But I

would not dwell upon the possibility, and struggled to get rid of my bewildering conjectures.

“ Whatever may have been his error,” said I, in reply to an observation of the lady, “ it cannot, surely, have sprung from a vicious heart; for had it, I am convinced that though your natural affection might make you overlook it, it would have utterly prevented that devotedness which is displayed towards your father by all who know him, from your noble husband, down to the meanest peasant of the land.”

“ If, sir,” said she, “ the act for which he now suffers *was* a crime, its effects upon him almost raise it to the dignity of virtue itself; for such has been his remorse, even through years of splendid prosperity, the consequence of that act, that his whole life has been spent in deeds of benevolence and goodness, from a principle of retribution to mankind.”

I did not then stop to examine deeply the pardonable sophistry of this observation, nor shall I now. It will be more interesting to my readers to learn an instance of that philanthropy by which the affectionate daughter thought her

reasoning justified. For the sake of conciseness, I shall relate the circumstance in my own way, but I deprive it of much of its effect by not giving it in her colloquial phrase.



## CHAPTER VI.

THIS best loved daughter of the then exile, but once count, general, and man of influence and wealth, was sought for in marriage by some of the first characters of the day—anxious for an alliance with such a man as her father, and for the possession of such loveliness as distinguished her. Amongst her suitors was one of those marshals of France, who, with a title of almost the highest rank, possessed a celebrity which none of his illustrious brother-soldiers eclipsed. He was incalculably rich; and his alliance might, at that period, be considered as one of the most splendid which the country afforded. The father, mother, and family of the beautiful Stephanie were delighted with the offer, for they knew nothing of her secret attachment to a younger lover. Eugene de S——, the marshal's aid-de-camp, was twenty years of age. The marshal had numbered more than fifty summers, and his blanched locks did not

form a stronger contrast to the dark chestnut of Eugene's flowing hair, than did his stiff and uninviting manners to all that was beautiful and manly in Eugene's person and demeanor. The marshal and his aid-de-camp had been presented to Stephanie on the same day. The public courtship, and the secret attachment, proceeded at the same time, and nearly at the same pace: two or three interviews had decided both, and the rapidity of each was astonishing. The marshal and his aid-de-camp were equally the sport of their feelings. The one was sure of marrying Stephanie, and was raised to the highest pinnacle of an old man's rapture. The other was sure of losing her, and sunk in the depths of youthful despair.

The whole business was so sudden, that Stephanie was half bewildered. Her consent to the alliance had been scarcely demanded: it was proposed, and she made no objection. The surrender of her affections had never been asked; yet they were irrevocably disposed of. The conduct of the rivals, too, was not a little embarrassing. The marshal had never talked

of love, but a great deal of the importance of his functions, and the dignity of his station. Eugene had never declared his sentiments, but Stephanie suspected them from his looks, and other tokens which lovers only can understand. But he had not dared to speak out; and the preparations for the union were all arranged, and the day fixed, without his venturing to tell Stephanie, in plain terms, that he loved her. She knew very well that he did love her notwithstanding, and he saw that his passion was returned with an ardour that fully equalled his own. But it seemed utter insanity to indulge the slightest hope; and the young couple mutually and tacitly submitted to the certainty of their despair.

Eugene was the marshal's favourite officer, and it was on him that the negotiations devolved which led to the matrimonial preparatives. Public business occupied the marshal incessantly up to the very day of his projected wedding; while his youthful deputy was constantly despatched with messages and letters. He had strict orders to bring matters to as



speedy a conclusion as possible; for, as the marshal used to say, "The affairs of a great nation ought not to wait on the *trifling* of individuals."

On the morning fixed on for the wedding, Eugene was sent with a verbal message from the marshal, to be delivered to Stephanie herself. "You will tell her," said the marshal, "that I am in utter despair at being obliged to disappoint her anxiety, and strike such a blow to her affection"—(Eugene's heart was bounding, and almost bursting through his breast)—"but that matters of state have unexpectedly occurred, which make it totally impossible for me to fulfil my engagement to go to church this morning"—(Eugene nearly fainted from emotion)—"until half an hour after the appointed time." Eugene made an obeisance, staggered out of the house, and, more dead than alive, hastened to mount his horse, and rode up to Stephanie's dwelling.

When he arrived, the bustle and magnificence of preparation nearly drove him mad. A Parisian marriage is a grand and boisterous affair,

and this was intended to be one of the most distinguished every way. Eugene asked for the count. He was dressing. "The countess?" "Dressing." "Mademoiselle?" "She was already dressed, and anxiously waiting the marshal in the drawing-room."

"Anxiously! I must see her, then, immediately," cried Eugene, in a fierce tone, of which the servants did not comprehend the meaning, and of which Eugene was himself unconscious. He was ushered in, and there sat Stephanie alone, decked out in roses which had no fellow-tinge upon her cheek, and in finery which ill-assorted with her heart's misery. Eugene stammered forth his message in a voice so choked and faltering, that Stephanie, unable to restrain herself, burst into tears. To what frenzy does not excessive love at times drive on his victims! Eugene, for a moment, believed Stephanie's tears to flow from offended vanity and pride, and little suspected that she did not comprehend one word of the marshal's message, while shocked at the appearance and manner of its bearer. The hapless messenger stood

awhile dumb and stupefied; but she wept so bitterly, that he could not resist her distress, and advancing some paces towards her, asked if he should summon the servants.

“And would you, for the poor triumph of displaying your power over me, expose my despair?”

“Despair! Power over you! What do I hear? Oh! speak out, speak out, my Stephanie!—Tell me, do I deceive myself, or are these your real sentiments?”

“Spare me—spare me their confession,” cried she; “surely you are conscious of my misery!”

“You love me, then!” exclaimed he, throwing himself on his knees before her—“now, then, let me die; I have lived long enough!”

He here took her hand, on which he imprinted a thousand burning kisses—and a scene ensued which not even the actors could describe. They had recovered their calmness in some degree; and were exchanging consolations on their mutual despair, when an outrider of the marshal galloped into the court-yard; and in a moment more a servant entered the room, to



inform Stephanie that the impatient veteran had abandoned all matters of state and business, and was driving up to the house in the utmost haste. At the abrupt delivery of this message, Eugene started up, hurried to the window, and seeing the superb open carriage containing the marshal, and followed by his splendid suite, he attempted, without knowing what he did, to fly from the scene; but tottered when he reached the middle of the chamber, and fell, without sense or motion, on the floor.

The wretched and fainting Stephanie, roused to sensation, and half frantic, flew towards the sufferer, and threw herself on her knees beside him. She would have cried for help, but she was almost suffocating, and could not utter a sound. In this crisis the door was flung open, and, with all the pomp and solemnity suitable to his state—in came the marshal, ushered by the happy father, leading the mother in his hand, and followed by a crowd of common friends. Imagination may picture the surprise, the disappointment, and the compassion which actuated more or less the several witnesses.

“ You love him, then ?” said the father, after some broken explanations on the part of Stephanie. “ Indeed, indeed, I do !” replied she.

“ And you, Captain de S——, you love my daughter ?”

“ To distraction, count !” cried Eugene, who had recovered his senses, and burned with hope at the turn which affairs were taking.

“ Then, by heavens you shall be her husband—and no one but you ! What say you, marshal ?”

“ Why, my dear count, I am a man of few words, and it strikes me that little can be said on an affair like the present.—Besides, public business of great importance waits for me—and my functions are manifold. I can only, therefore, assure you, that the happiness of your daughter being the first object of my desires—next to the duties which my public functions impose—I am enchanted to have discovered the method of promoting it. I shall, therefore, beg to retire, offering to Mademoiselle Stephanie the assurance of my profound homage, the use of my equipage which waits below, and

my advice that she and my friend Eugene set off to the church without delay, nor disappoint the priest and the amiable society which surround me."

The marriage of the lovers was in consequence celebrated, but not quite so quickly as the marshal had recommended; and the count had soon good reason to rejoice in his noble conduct, for the changes of affairs hurled the marshal from all his grandeur, and he soon after died: while Eugene's father having gone over, and remained firm in his allegiance to the new sovereign, the son was enabled to afford very considerable protection to his wife's family and dependents, although without power to screen her father altogether, as has been already seen.

In addition to this trait of disinterestedness in the character of her father, Madame de S—— made me acquainted with several others of equal liberality; and she accounted for his present influence and security among the people of the Landes, by informing me that he had been intimately connected with the district, by



public employments and constant efforts for its improvement, for the last twenty years.

The short twilight of this climate was now passing rapidly over, and when we reached La Teste, it had become nearly dark. As we approached "The French Crown," the exile and Eugene stopped till we joined them, and we then walked all together towards the inn. "Here are, no doubt, your quarters, sir?" asked the exile. "Yes," replied I. "And here, too, are we going to take our last repast together, my daughter," added he, taking one of her hands in both of his.

"Oh say not so, my dear father!" she replied. "There may be yet bright days in store for us: once escaped to a land of liberty, you may securely look forward to some change—and none can be for the worse. Cheer up, my father. I cannot express to you how my heart feels lightened from having communicated to this amiable stranger so many acts of your virtue. Heaven will not, surely, cast off so good a man."

“ Ah !” said he, mournfully, “ If Heaven did always favour the good in this life, how few would take the trouble to be vicious ! But we must hope for that justice hereafter, which we find not here.—But how durst I speak thus ? Am I not justly punished ? Heaven knows my guilt, and will not be appeased.—Then let me suffer !”

With these words, rapidly uttered, he rushed into the inn, and mounted the stairs. Eugene and Stephanie followed ; and they all three entered a chamber where I observed a table laid with preparations for supper. I was glad to leave them awhile to themselves—so I retired to my own room, where I had the luxury of getting rid of my clothes, still soaked from the adventure on the beach. The operation of changing being completed, I descended, and resolved not to intrude upon the privacy of the party above—I was making my way to the kitchen, the usual resort for amusement and information in houses of this kind. As I approached the door, I heard first loud speaking, and then a burst of merriment from several

mingled voices, but one of which appeared familiar to my ears. This was succeeded by a hushed attention, while some one spoke to the following effect—in sounds which I thought I recognized.

“ Yes, my lads ! as I was saying, \* \* \* \* ! many a gentleman follows by choice what an artist pursues professionally. If I choose, for example, to cook a supper for a friend, I honour my office, \* \* \* \* ! instead of it degrading me.—Hand me that frying-pan, Marie ! Jump ! \* \* \* \* ! if you had but half the activity of your cousin Cazille, there might be some hope of you ; but you’ll never be more than a slovenly kitchen-wench, never ! ”

Astonishment and alarm for my friends above held me breathless, as he went on .

“ Yes, gentlemen, you may despise the arts of the kitchen ; but you forget, \* \* \* \* ! that Gallienus, though an emperor, was chiefly famed for his culinary knowledge—that Cadmus the great, great grandfather of Bacchus, and founder of Thebes, was cook to the king of Sidon ! do you know ”—



Although sure of my man, I wanted still a visual proof of his identity, and I gently pushed the door, which was already partly open. Before me was the kitchen fire, on one side of which were four sailors drinking, and at the other stood Monsieur the Inspector of the Forests, with his back towards me, his head covered with a white cotton cap, his coat off, his shirt sleeves tucked up, a long apron tied round his waist, a knife in one hand, a frying-pan in the other—and altogether, in short, a figure fit for the frontispiece of a cookery book. The flow of his eloquence was for a moment interrupted by his occupation; and as I had seen and heard enough to satisfy me every way, I made a precipitate retreat up stairs, and, without any ceremony, entered the room where the party was seated.

“Pardon me, sir,” said I, addressing the principal personage; “I do not wish needlessly to alarm you, but I fear there is danger of your being discovered!”

“How!” exclaimed the two gentlemen, start-

ing from their chairs, "Have you seen any one?"

"Yes," said I, "that very questionable person the inspector of the forests is at this moment in the house."

"Indeed! In the kitchen, I hope," said the father.

"Is that all?" cried Eugene.

"Oh! poor La Broche!" exclaimed Stephanie; and a smile which would, in happier circumstances, have expanded to a hearty laugh, was exhibited on each of their countenances.

"To remove your astonishment, my good sir," said the stranger, "know that that poor fellow was my cook for many years, until, through the interest of my son-in-law here, when I was ruined, he got the appointment which now brings him to this place—that he has been the chief instrument in procuring means for my escape—and is at this moment dressing my supper, as a last mark of his respect."

"Your *cook*! Is it possible!" exclaimed I—

“but he has been a soldier—a serjeant of dragoons?”

“Yes, yes, he had the rank to entitle him to forage and allowances.”

“Known to, and distinguished by all the marshals, and most of the generals, for his courage?”

“For his cowardice, his conceit, and his cookery.”

“He has made the campaigns of Italy, Germany, and Russia?”

“True; in my kitchen.”

“Then his wounds?”

“His wounds!”

“Yes! the loss of his finger?”

“Oh! in chopping off the tail of a leg of mutton.”

“The scar on his forehead?”

“Received in falling over an iron pot one evening, when drunk.”

“The cut across his cheek?”

“Given him by a scullion with a carving knife, in return for a volley of curses, and the stroke of a soup-ladle on the shoulders.”



“ But his fluent discourse—his knowledge of ancient names—his acquaintance with Cadmus, Bacchus, Gallienus, Lycurgus, Apicius——?”

“ Picked up here and there from books which touch upon cookery, and strung together for his use, most probably by some poor pedagogue.”

“ Is it possible ?”

“ Are you satisfied ?”

“ Perfectly !”

“ Then sit down to supper, for here it comes.”

And true enough the supper was coming, for the savoury fumes of soup appeared at the door ; and in the midst of them was enveloped the fiery face of the inspector, who bore himself the smoking tureen. He advanced with proud strides towards the table, and was just in the act of placing the tureen in the centre, when, by ill luck, his eyes encountered mine, fixed full upon him with a stare of many combinations. The shock was like that of an electric battery, and made him bound and spring sideways, plump against Ranger, who lay stretched under a corner of the table-cloth,

when he stumbled and fell upon the fragile table, which broke down with a crash, mingling in one common ruin soup, dishes, plates, glasses, and all the paraphernalia of the forthcoming repast.

Curses from the inspector—roars of laughter from Eugene and myself—screams of inquiry from the landlady, and of explanation from the maid—with piercing yells from poor Ranger, who was more frightened than hurt, formed the accompaniments to this exhibition of mishap. Even the exile and Stephanie found it impossible to resist a momentary feeling of mirth—but he soon relapsed into serious looks, and Eugene and I caught the contagion; the landlady and the maid hushed their screams, and put on grave faces, from veneration to the count; Stephanie was silent and sad; so when the mortified inspector scrambled out of the ruins and stood before us, wiping the soup from his face with his drenched and scalding night-cap, he met nothing but a group of blank and dismal countenances, on which to repose his agitation.

“ \* \* \* \* ! ” said he, looking wofully at me, “ what devil has brought you here to catch me in this pickle, and destroy the best *consommée* ever tasted within the walls of The French Crown ? ”

He was quite crest-fallen, and had totally lost his bullying tone. I pitied the poor fellow, for I remembered his hospitality ; and I liked the humility which made him, for gratitude, descend from his new-born honours to his former station. I therefore stretched out my hand to him, saying, “ Never mind, never mind, Monsieur the Inspector : we can all sup without soup, I am certain.”

“ Oh yes ! that we can,” was echoed round ; and he looked somewhat consoled.

“ But \* \* \* \* ! to be caught in a cook’s cap and apron ! ”

“ What of that ! ” said I. “ A gentleman often follows by choice what an artist pursues professionally—and if you choose to cook a supper for a friend, you honour the office, instead of its degrading you.”

“ A generous sentiment, \* \* \* \* ! and expressed



in my own words! Yes," added he, winking significantly yet respectfully towards the others, "yes, these gentlemen and this lady know that I have dabbled in the kitchen as an amateur, and like now and then to relax from my labours—fanning myself with a gridiron, or shaking hands with a stewpan\*." This sally was followed by the self-approving laugh (which yet tingles in my reader's ears, I hope), for it appeared that the inspector could not restrain his jocularities, even in the presence of his patrons.

"Well, well, La Broche," said the exile, "forget the soup, and think now of what follows it. Go, change your uncomfortable trappings, and join us at the supper which we owe to your skill. Make haste; for you know time does not wait for me, nor tide neither."

The inspector bowed low, and retreated to arrange his toilette. The exile heaved a deep

\* This last remark appears to have been borrowed, heaven knows how, from that savoury work "The Cook's Oracle;"—a book which every man must relish, who likes sound sense garnished with genuine humour, pages of "sauce piquante," and precepts at once philosophic and palatable.

sigh, the first which had escaped him in my presence. His children echoed it more heavily; and their sadness infected me. The new modelling the architecture of the tables diverted my attention for awhile; and supper was soon followed by the appearance of the re-organized inspector, who took a chair at one end of the table, with an ease, as if he was quite in his proper place; and he was treated by his former master with a cordiality which would look odd to persons not accustomed to the continent, but which, somehow, does not *there* seem at all undignified or degrading.

The repast went silently on, four-fifths of the party lost in thought—the remaining one more substantially employed. When the inspector appeared to be about half-done eating, and the rest of us were entirely satisfied, the door was opened by the landlady, who advanced, with a corner of her apron to her eyes, and sobbed out to the exile that a poor fellow below-stairs entreated permission to come up, and express his gratitude and duty.

“No, my good woman, not now,” said the

exile: "do spare me any unnecessary scenes of sorrow."

"Ah! sir, it is not sorrow that makes me weep just now. There will be time enough for that in half an hour hence—when you are going to leave us for ever, and perhaps to be swallowed up in the wide ocean, or dashed to pieces against the rocks. You will see that I can be as sorrowful then as any one in La Teste; but at present I am crying for happiness, because poor Geoffroi, the carrier, is laughing and crying, and singing and dancing altogether in the kitchen, half wild with joy."

This combination of methodical sentiment, horrible anticipations, and ill-timed happiness, was sufficiently ludicrous to light up the features of the exile with another gleam—but it was like the latent glimmer of an expiring lamp, for he smiled no more that night.

"Then let poor Geoffroi come up. It will be a comfort to me to see one heart happy in this heavy hour, and honest enough to put on no mask of sorrow. Send him up!"

The landlady tripped across the room, and



called shrilly at the door for Geoffroi, who answered in person, by popping in his head, as soon almost as she had pronounced his name.

“Here I am, sir,” said he; “I knew you would let me in, so I followed Madame Benoist up stairs, and waited outside. Oh! my noble count—for I would give you your title though your neck was under the guillotine—how am I to thank your bounty? My heart was breaking for your sake, and you have mended it all for my own—and a little for Cazille’s, to be sure. Oh! sir, your generosity has been near killing me—but I am easier now that I can thank you.”

“Your discourse is quite a mystery to me, my good fellow—you owe me no thanks.—I have shown you no bounty.—What do you mean?”

“Ah! I knew how it would be, count; and I told my mother, and Madame Benoist below-stairs, and Marie, and the sailors all, that you would deny the fact as flat as a criminal at the place of execution.”

These home strokes, sent out by Geoffroi in

the way of illustration, did not at all ruffle the exile; but they were torturing to Stephanie and Eugene, and dyed my face a deep scarlet; while the inspector took them so much to heart, that he started up, and, with genuine delicacy, called out fiercely to Geoffroi,

“What do you mean, \* \* \* \* ! you sneaking dog, to talk of executions and guillotines to the count there, who is condemned to and flying from both the one and the other? Have you no sense of decorum in your stupid head? Monsieur, you must excuse the fellow’s bluntness for his honesty’s sake. He’s an honest fellow, \* \* \* \* ! after all.”

“Thank you, Monsieur the inspector,” replied Geoffroi; “it is well for every man who has so good an excuse for his roughness. And thank *you* once more, noble sir, in my own name and that of my dear Cazille. These hundred francs (chinking five gold Napoleons in his hand), these hundred francs will make us the happiest couple in the Landes; and we will bless you for them every day, night and morning—after to-morrow, when, God willing,

we shall be married, and not much at leisure for any thing else."

He here blubbered like a child, and laughed most irresistibly; and was meanwhile bowing his way backwards towards the door, when the exile addressed him, in that benevolent and soothing tone which so fixed my attention on our first meeting. "My good Geoffroi, I must not suffer you to load me with unmerited praise. This money did not come from me. My daughter here, or her husband, perhaps, has taken this method of rewarding poor Cazille's attentions and fidelity. For myself, I must candidly confess that I forgot both you and her."

"Why yes," said Stephanie, "I did, indeed, give this sum to Cazille on leaving the inn this morning; but I scarcely know how Geoffroi could have received it without knowing who it came from."

"You gave a hundred francs to Cazille, madame?" exclaimed Geoffroi, hysterically; "then we are rich indeed, for this money came from some other source. I got it half an hour ago from the post-office, enclosed in this paper."



He here produced a letter addressed to  
“ Monsieur Geoffroi, the Carrier,  
Living with his mother,  
La Teste.”

Within was written, “ From a friend ;” and in it had been enclosed the five gold pieces.

“ Then,” exclaimed the exile, “ this secret doer of good must have been no other than La Broche himself! Come, come, La Broche, do not be ashamed of a generous deed. Look up, man, and receive the honest fellow’s thanks.”

The inspector waved his hand, in rejection of praise or acknowledgment—rubbed his whiskers—pulled up his shirt collar—muttered a few nothings—and, in short, displayed all the pitiful and paltry flirtations of those who accept of thanks for services never performed.

“ What a scoundrel !” thought I to myself, as I turned in disgust towards the window, and while poor Geoffroi loaded his supposed benefactor with blessings, and offers of himself, his cart and oxen, for ever and ever, to carry Monsieur the inspector from La Teste to Bordeaux and back again, with all his stores of

eatables—barring fish, which he never admitted among other goods!

The whole party joined in honouring the inspector's liberal donation; and I warrant that Geoffroi is to this day ignorant to whom he owes his wedding gift.

The hour of departure now fast arriving, La Broche was despatched to make the final arrangements with the sailors who waited below. The exile seemed to summon up every energy of his soul to meet the separation from all that was dear to him. His daughter was quite overpowered as the moment arrived; and her temporary calm was succeeded by a whirlwind of anguish and despair. She threw herself on her father's neck, as though she would have clung there for ever; and the scene becoming insupportably painful, I retired from the chamber, quitted the house, and walked out upon the beach.

The night was quite dark, for the moon had not yet risen. There was not a breath of wind. Nothing was to be seen near me but the little boat, just beginning to float on the tide which

was now full in, and three or four fishing vessels with the dusky huts of their owners close by, made visible by their scanty lights. The waves rippled onwards with a mournful murmur, and I thought every thing was suited to the melancholy of the moment. In less than ten minutes I distinguished the party leaving the inn, lighted by the landlady, the inspector, and Geoffroi. The exile seemed in the act of consoling his daughter, while Eugene stepped on before to place some trifles in the boat. No sooner did they reach the beach, than a number of the poor inhabitants came round them, weeping real tears of honest attachment, and sending up prayers which came from the bottom of their hearts. The exile walked through these groups with an air at once noble and gracious; and approaching me, he took me by the hand.

“ Well, sir,” said I, returning his cordial pressure, “ this farewell is surely consolatory.”

“ It is,” replied he, “ I acknowledge it. I was always an ambitious man, and loved to believe myself the people’s idol. This is the first



moment in which I could be certain of their attachment, and it is delightful!"

As the resin torches threw their red glare on his face, I saw that his eyes were swimming in tears.

"No," said he, "they will not out. I would weep, but that is a luxury long, long denied me. You see me moved—I am not ashamed of it. Shouts of victory—my personal sufferings—my children's anguish—the memory of my mourning and desolate wife—nothing could have brought the moisture to my eyes but this unquestionable proof of public regard. This is my proudest triumph. I will and must cherish it."

He then turned to the people, and addressed them for a few minutes in a strain of exalted eloquence and feeling. His discourse having been chiefly political, it is not necessary to attempt a skeleton record of it here. Every sentiment was noble, and every sentence well-expressed. He spoke to them of their duties as citizens and subjects; gave them honest and

sound advice; and compressed into this brief and unpremeditated harangue matter which a less skilful orator might have swelled to ten times its extent. The effect of this address was prodigious on both the speaker and his audience. Every one of his listeners seemed elevated beyond the common height of feeling and character; and these simple fishermen showed like a band of bold and well-informed beings, while the very women participated in their looks of energy and intelligence.

When he ceased, a murmur of applause ran round the circle which encompassed him; and one voice, more daring than the rest, ventured, or perhaps could not repress, a shout. The impulse thus given, a cheering and simultaneous burst escaped from the crowd, and resounded in a dozen distinct repetitions along the beach.

“Now, my friend,” said he, addressing me with a mien of glowing energy, “now then, farewell! Your generous sympathy has sunk deep in my heart; and we may meet, perhaps, again—when I shall be able to express my gra-

titude in the way I like the best. I am no longer sunk in gloom. Hope sheds her lights upon my soul; and this night, so lately the most miserable, is transformed by her magic touch to the happiest of many a year.—In thus parting from you, I have but one request to make. My name is unknown to you. Do not seek to find it out; for I would not have it reach your knowledge, unaccompanied by the explanation of that crime which has most distinguished it, and which none but I could give you. Should you, however, discover it by chance, and with it learn the secret of my shame and my remorse, shrink not from my recollection as from something monstrous; but remember I am mortal, punished, and penitent!”

I made no answer but by a pressure of the hand—for it was one of those moments in which I dared not trust to words.—He acknowledged my reply in the same way, with equal warmth; and then turned towards his daughter. Her aspect was quite changed. She was no longer depressed or in tears. The eloquence and



heroic bearing of her father, and the enthusiasm it produced in the people, had worked on her as on the rest. She embraced him with fondness, but at the same time with animation. While they were locked in each other's arms, a flash appeared far out in the bay, and then the report of cannon rolled along the waters.

“Hark! The signal for sailing!” exclaimed the exile.

“Away, then, my father, away!” said Stephanie.

“Adieu, noblest, best of men!” cried Eugene.

“Bless you! bless you!” burst from every other tongue. The exile stepped into the boat and seized the helm, as I gazed on his face for the last time. The sailors took their oars—another, and another gun sent out its signal-flash and its swelling peal.—Answering shouts from the shore returned the salute—the splashing of the oars on the water soon died away—and the sparkling lustre which they struck from

the waves was in a little more lost in the darkness.

I stood for a while riveted to the spot, as the actors of this scene gradually retired. I soon found that I was alone, and I turned my steps towards the inn. In the yard stood Eugene and Stephanie. They were just preparing to mount their horses, being determined to gain the forest inn that night, so as to reach Bordeaux the next morning. They only waited for the inspector, who was to accompany them to the borders of the Landes, where they were to separate, for fear of attracting observation; and, finally, Geoffroi was setting out on foot, to throw himself into Cazille's arms, and entreat her to accompany him to the altar on the morrow.

I took a cordial farewell of the affectionate daughter and her well-matched mate. He parted from me like a friend. Her voice did not falter when she bade me adieu! but I saw her face in the faint light of the hostler's candle. It was deadly pale, and I thought the excite-

ment which hitherto supported her had nearly died away. But on observing her more closely, I remarked a brilliancy in her eyes, which seemed the offspring of some high resolve, and shone on her pallid cheeks—like the sun on a bed of snow—with painful and almost unnatural lustre.

They rode off; and, as I entered the house, the inspector caught my attention, making his way out of the kitchen—his mouth crammed—his jaws at work—a huge unpicked bone in one hand, and a bottle in the other—the first of which he was striving to stuff into his mouth, and the latter into his pocket—while a confused jumble of suffocating sounds was vainly struggling for utterance from his overloaded maw. Geoffroi was ushering him out and carrying his sabre, pistols, whip, and great-coat, with the willing obsequiousness of gratitude. I thought them a fine contrast, as I walked up the stairs, and gave to one a smile of good-will, and the other a sneer of contempt, while I compared their characters, and shut my door behind me.



I set out the next morning, in a different direction from that by which I had approached La Teste; and that part of the country having no farther interest for me, I left it to be examined more minutely by those to whom it might offer new attractions.

## CHAPTER VII.

DISTANT countries and different pursuits soon called off my attention from dwelling on these scenes ; and in some time from my leaving La Teste, my mind only retained the recollection, but had lost the fresh imprint of my adventure. It so happened, that immediately after having bade adieu to the Landes, I quitted the country altogether, and seas and mountains intervened to cut off the sources of information respecting it. I heard of proscription lists and pardons, and deaths, and other casualties among the condemned or exiled persons obnoxious to punishment, or considered worthy of mercy ; and many names reached me publicly, but not one which gave me any clew to the knowledge of the Exile's fate. I felt also his last request as a serious obligation, and I therefore sought no direct means of obtaining any intimation of his name.

Circumstances threw me once more into France in eighteen months after my parting

with him ; and in the midst of that season, when frost and snow with us wrap comfort in its winding-sheet, and famine stares the wretched in the face, I found myself walking in a richly swelling country—where the olive, the pomegranate, and the fig-tree were still in bloom ; where the hum of bees, and the sighing breath of the south, formed the music of the air ; while orange-groves and myrtles poured a fragrance upon months, which were elsewhere wintery.

I had entered France at a quarter far distant from that which had been the scene of this story, and was, as usual, musing my way through the by-roads of a beautiful landscape, when I came, at the approach of evening, to a village that seemed decorated with all the preparations for a fête. The houses were decked out with the whole finery of their interior ornaments ; curtains and counterpanes were hung upon the walls ; the treasures of the gardens were displayed in the windows ; festoons dangled across the little street ; preparations for bonfires were ready on the road ; and every one was dressed in the high-holiday costume of the country.



On a rising ground, close to the village, the upper part of a handsome mansion was discoverable through tasteful plantations and vineyards. It had every appearance of wealth and respectability; and, as the gate which opened on its fine avenue of palm-trees seemed to invite the crowds of peasantry, collecting from every point, I deposited the appendages of my journey in the village inn, and, with my stick in my hand, joined one of the groups which were ascending towards the house.

Whenever I want information on occasions of this nature, I invariably address myself to some old peasant, from whose frankness I am sure of sincerity, while the garrulity of age makes such a chronicler invaluable.

“A joyous scene this, my friend,” said I, saluting a little, active old man, in whose sharp chesnut-coloured visage, and fiery black eyes, shone the intelligence which marks the character of his country.

“You may well say that, sir. When an honest man returns to his home, after nearly two years banishment, the scene which wel-

comes his coming should be joyous; and when the returning exile happens to be of consequence, by rank and wealth, as well as by virtue, it is a proud day for the country."

By one of those irresistible strokes of conviction, which sometimes determine us, on lighter proof than this, I was on the instant satisfied in my own mind that fate had thrown me here to witness the triumphant return of the persecuted and pardoned Exile of the Landes. I burned with excessive curiosity, or any better feeling the reader likes; but I would not suffer a question to escape me that might lead to the mention of the name, which I was now resolved not to hear but from his own lips. I was, however, anxious to be certain that my belief was well grounded, and I went on. "When is the count expected to arrive?"

"In an hour certainly."

"Is the countess at home?"

"Where else would she be on such a day as this?"

"And his daughter and her husband?"

"Oh! they are at the house too, I suppose."

These answers left me no doubt, and I walked up the avenue without any more hesitation; and filled with a nervous yet pleasurable anxiety, which—like a summer breeze on the breast of ocean—seemed at once to ruffle and warm my bosom.

When we arrived close to the house, the appearance of every thing was beautifully striking. It was an edifice of noble structure, built in the regular and simple majesty of Grecian taste. All was on a princely scale—façade, columns, balcony, and balustrades. In front was an extensive lawn, bounded by a terrace of considerable extent. Here were laid out tables, covered with a profusion of costly refreshments, of which all comers seemed indiscriminately to partake. Several groups of dancers exhibited on the grass—and the music, the flowers, the silk flags, and other emblems of rejoicing, seemed all as it were reflections from a sky of the brightest hue and purest serenity.

My eye sought, amidst the crowd of well-dressed gentry and gaudily-attired peasants,



for Stephanie and her husband, but in vain. It then asked for the mistress of the fête, and soon fixed itself upon the person of a tall and handsome female, whose air of happiness, and hospitable activity, pronounced her to be the object of its inquiry. Knowing that my foreign appearance must have attracted notice, and impatient to explain that I had some claims to offer, in excuse of my apparent intrusion, I advanced towards the lady, and told her that, having arrived by accident in the neighbourhood, I had taken the liberty, though a stranger, to join myself to the crowd of visitors who had assembled to hail the joyous event of the day. She replied, with a demeanour of noble courtesy, that none were strangers at such a time—but that all who felt an interest in the return of her husband must be considered in the light of friends.

“Then, madame,” said I, “since as a mere unknown you favour me with that title, I cannot resist the pleasure of advancing a claim to it—on slight grounds certainly—but stronger than that universal feeling to which you grant the

privilege. In short, madame, I had the honour of the count's acquaintance, as well as that of your amiable daughter and her husband; and it would be difficult to express the sensation with which I anticipate their recognition of me, on such a day as this."

"You are then, sir, really a friend of my husband's!—I say a friend, for all who know him are so. You formed his acquaintance, then, during his hours of exile? You are an American?"

"No, madame, I am a British subject."

"A British subject, and yet my husband's friend! Where then, or under what circumstances, could you have known him?"

At this question I began, for the first instant, to fear that I might be going too far, and was, perhaps, mistaken. It was very possible that some other person might be in question, instead of *my* exile, and I felt a momentary embarrassment, which prevented my replying directly to the countess's question.

"Ah! sir," said she, "I think I understand you. You are, perhaps, one of those persons

who fled from England, during the late order of things, with intelligence to our government—and you may not, under present circumstances, wish to compromise yourself. Keep, then, your secret, sir,—and excuse my imprudence.”

The devil! thought I—am I, on all occasions and circumstances, to appear to the members of this family—if it is the same family—in the loathsome aspect of a spy, an informer, or a traitor!

“Madame, you mistake me,” exclaimed I with warmth. “If I could have the pleasure of seeing your daughter or her husband, they could give an answer to your dishonouring supposition.”

“Pardon me, sir, I intreat you,” cried the countess—“in the confusion and flutter of my feelings, I scarcely know what I say.—But here comes my daughter, Madame de V——, and her husband, who will receive you according to your merit, and make my apologies.”

The reader may well believe that at the name of Madame de V—— I was thunder-



struck, for no sound could be more unlike than it was to that of Madame de S——. I turned round, only to have my worst fears most fully confirmed; for in the lady who approached I saw a total stranger, young and handsome certainly, but not half as handsome as Madame de S——, of short stature, and inclined to *embon-point*—while the gentleman, on whose arm she leaned, was a meagre, stiff-looking, powdered personage, of upwards of forty.

“Here, my dear Lucille,” said the countess, in an habitually gracious, but hurried tone, as if her mind was any where but with me—“here is a very particular friend of yours and Monsieur de V——, as well as of your dear father.”

Madame de V—— dropped me a low and astonished curtsy; her husband flung upwards a supercilious salutation; and I exclaimed—

“Your pardon, madame. I said neither old nor particular—I said a mere acquaintance—and did not even mention the name of Monsieur de V——. In short, madame, I am all error and confusion.—I quite mistook your house,

family, and husband, who I now find is a totally different person from the count, my friend."

"Sir, I am sincerely sorry for your embarrassment.—Who—what count could you have meant in similar circumstances with my husband?"

"Who—what count?—Why, madame—really and—honestly—I cannot answer your question! I am quite ignorant of his name—it is now a long time since I saw him—and then only once. I can only say, madame, that his daughter, for whom I had mistaken this lady, was much handsomer—that is, rather taller, madame—and not so fat—somewhat more slender, I should say.—In fact, madame, her husband was not so old—I mean he was a good deal younger than this young gentleman.—In short, their names were Monsieur and Madame de S——, and that is really all I can say on the subject."

"Heavens!" cried Madame de V——, not at all annoyed or confused at my blundering, "the gentleman means my dear sister, Stephanie."

“The very same, madame!” exclaimed I, in the utmost delight. “Stephanie—your dear sister, Stephanie—and her husband Eugene—your dear brother-in-law Eugene—and your husband—(How stupid!)—your father, I mean, madame. Quite a different looking man—much older—that is, not quite so young looking.—In short, ladies, I am enchanted, and almost beside myself, to find that I am right after all,” cried I, wiping away the dew of agitation and confusion which overspread my brow.

“And you did really know our dear Stephanie, Eugene, and my father?”

“Yes, to be sure I did, my dear madame, and passed several hours with them in the Landes of Gascony, at the very latest moments of your father’s stay in France!”

“What! what!” cried the mother and daughter together. “Is it then, indeed, true that we see before us that liberal and generous traveller, who was the solace of those dreadful hours? Are you, sir, that man, and have we hesitated an instant in acknowledging you, my dear, dear sir!”



Here they took each a hand ; and I am certain that had I given my countenance to their wishes, they would have each possessed themselves of a cheek as well.

“ Ah ! my friends,” said the mother to the persons around her, “ look upon this gentleman as one of yourselves. This, then, is he so fondly mentioned by my Stephanie—who was the companion of my dear husband’s last lingerings on the shores of his beloved country—and whom Heaven has sent to be the witness of his triumphant return !”

While the company made me their acknowledgments, she continued, “ Now, then, sir, you will enter our dwelling in your true capacity as *a friend of the house* \*. Follow me ; and as you have only seen my husband in the poor disguise of an exiled criminal, let me show you his semblance in his days of rank and distinction.”

I followed, with Madame de V——, by the grand entrance into the house ; and, passing through vestibule, ante-chamber, and saloons,

\* Ami de la maison.

reached at length a little *boudoir*—that elegant sanctuary of every Frenchwoman with any pretension to fashion. The furniture and decorations were in a style correspondent to the whole appearance of the house. A recess contained a bed of the most costly kind, from which the countess drew aside the curtain, and displayed, hanging against the wall, a portrait of her husband in the full costume of a general officer, and glowing in the splendid colouring of manly beauty and military distinction. This fine exhibition filled me with delight; and I anticipated with new pride my meeting the noble original as a friend. The transition to his daughter was a matter of course; and I inquired if I was not to have the pleasure of seeing Stephanie and her husband.

“See her! oh! that you shall, sir;” replied the countess with brimful eyes, “and in a situation fitting so rare and inestimable a daughter. You shall see her the returning companion of her father—she who was the comfort and support of his banishment.”

“How, madame! I do not comprehend you.

Surely Madame de S—— did not accompany her father?"

"No, sir, but she followed him almost immediately. When my dear Stephanie, overpowered by grief, had nearly sunk under its excess, and was roused to a new existence by the eloquent farewell of her father—to which you also were a listener—she took at the moment the inflexible resolution of sharing his exile and his fate. Under that impulse, she hurried his departure, as you saw; and having communicated her intention to her husband, whose thoughts were as her own, they only returned here to embrace me and my dear Lucille. Then hastening with the whole speed of duty and affection, they embarked at the nearest port, and, by a happy chance, the ship they sailed in reached the shores of my husband's exile some days before that which carried him; and when he at length landed on the beach, worn out and miserable by his agitated feelings and long voyage, the first signals that he saw were the outstretched arms of his daughter, and his first harbour of repose her throbbing



and affectionate bosom.—From thenceforward, till the hour when his pardon reached him, did she and her husband pay back their debt of gratitude by entire devotion to his service; and they now—even at this moment—approach together, to share the rapturous welcome of myself and my friends.”

Before I had time to express any one of the emotions which this recital excited, the countess resumed. “But at this instant I recall to mind that a letter is in my possession for you, sir.”

“A letter for *me*, madame!”

“Even so—a letter written by my husband on board the vessel the very night you parted from him, and sent by a fishing-boat to La Teste the next morning. It was enclosed to Monsieur de S——, to be given to you; but he and you had alike quitted the place, and it was forwarded to him here, and reached him the very day of his and Stephanie’s voluntary banishment—which was indeed that of their arrival from the Landes. Not knowing where to discover you—being ignorant even of your name—and willing still to hope that there was

a chance of your being one day led to this house—they entrusted it to my care ; and here it is with the seal unbroken, and the contents sacred from every eye.”

During this speech she had opened a satin-wood secretary, where, after a little search, she discovered the letter, which she put into my hands. I took it with a mixed sensation of surprise, gratification, and curiosity ; and, being anxious to indulge those feelings unobserved, I begged the countess’s permission to retire into the shrubbery, where I might be able to do so. She assented—I bowed to her and Madame de S——, and passed out upon the lawn. The crowd had considerably increased ; and much bustle was excited by the arrival of an *avant courier*, who announced that the travellers were little more than a league distant, and that their arrival could not be delayed beyond half an hour at furthest.

My heart palpitated with pleasure ; and, resolved not to lose a moment in perusing the letter, which I felt an almost necessary preparation for my meeting the count, I passed

hastily along the terrace to a little harbour at its extremity. I had a full view of the road, the avenue, and the grand entrance; and I saw the long train of dancers, with their garlands and gay dresses, lining the approach as far as I could distinguish. The air resounded with music—every combination of pleasure seemed to raise my mind to its highest pitch;—and in this mood I broke the seal. The letter was addressed

“ TO THE GENEROUS STRANGER.

“ On board my vessel. Thursday night.

“ We have only just parted; yet I feel the chain of circumstances which brought us together still unbroken—for something whispers me that we shall meet again. Under this impression, I cannot resist the impulse which leads me to address you. One of a thousand probable chances may inform you of my name; and I cannot endure the thought of your learning who and what I am, without knowing why and wherefore I am so.

“ In the hurry and confusion which surrounds



me, and in the agitation of my harassed mind, I can perform this task but in a broken and imperfect manner.—I cannot presume to call you friend—I will not address you by a colder title—and I expect from your mind that liberality which is promised by your manners.

“ You have heard me accuse myself of a great crime—you have heard the expressions of my remorse. I spoke truly in the first instance, and did not exaggerate in the latter. Yes! to me, and me alone, must be attributed the act which, more than all the congregated crimes of ages, stamps the foulest stain upon my country. Yet do not shudder—this act was mine—virtually mine, though many were concerned in its accomplishment. I had the power to have prevented it—to have saved, by one word, my country from shame—myself from infamy—and my——but I outrun myself.

“ This self-accusing is all too true—yet, paradoxical as it may seem, this very act was the offspring of excess of virtuous feeling—of that overstrained enthusiasm in politics, which, like religious fanaticism, hurries its blindfold votaries

to the most monstrous deeds.—But when *this* deed was done—when the veil fell from my eyes—when the body of my virtuous and innocent victim was stretched in death, and his blood reeking to the heavens—’twas then that I awoke from my dream—that conviction of my enormity burst upon me, and the demon of vengeance, uprising from the blood-drenched scaffold, seemed to shake before me the scorpion whip of retribution!—Even now I see the phantom scourge—my pores send forth a flood of suffering——

“ In the full flush of youthful vigour, I was thrown into the midst of awful events.—I saw the monstrous march of despotism, and I flung myself before the fiend, to stop his strides or be crushed in the struggle. It was no common contest. It was the immortal rights of man opposed to the powerful yet paltry workings of tyranny—the wrestlings of liberty with oppression—the clash of intellect with intolerance—the manacled but mighty arm of millions against the nervous pressure of corruption.—The popular mind was phrensied—what could

be looked for from its actions? We were forced and goaded on to desperation—and the crimson flood of guilt swept alike over tyrants and slaves.

“ Will the warning be listened to? Will the despots of our days look back on those which are no more? Or will a bold, yet thoughtful band throw themselves between mobs and tyrants, and force them to their own salvation! The people never cast their eyes behind them. —Let their rulers think on the fact, and profit by its knowledge.

“ I entered that assembly which was to open the path to my country’s freedom, like a young lover burning to embrace the idol of his heart and his mind. My passions were roused—my head on flame. Discussion followed discussion—and frantic denunciations against royalty were the forced fruits of the madness of monarchs. They defied and denounced us. We dared their contempt and their anathemas—we met them in the conflict—and we triumphed!

“ In the assembly of the nation, of which I was such a member as I paint myself, I had



three friends, over whom my control was so unlimited, that they swore to follow my leading on every question, great or small. The greatest of all questions came.—I had no waverings—I gave my vote—my friends echoed the sound—fatal and horrid sound! The die was cast—the lists were reckoned—the majority announced. *Four* voices had decided the question—or rather one voice, and that one *mine*! The sentence was DEATH—my king was sacrificed—and I—

### A REGICIDE!"

The first effect of this letter upon me was a stupified astonishment—next came a bitter sorrow, as if I had lost a friend by death—I then resolved to quit the place for ever.

I do not mean to make here a confession of my political faith; but I unhesitatingly avow one of my political prejudices, the rather as it is one which I intend religiously to preserve. I mean my repugnance to the persons who condemned Louis XVI. to the scaffold. That some of those persons may have been good men is a

startling, but, nevertheless, a very proveable theorem. That a vile deed may be done from a mistaken principle of right is too true—but in the cause of liberty even—the noblest cause of all—there is something which makes us shrink from the name of an assassin. But in the case where it is murder for its own sake—where the victim is the victim of his virtues—where policy and humanity alike forbid the blow—and where it is struck merely that blood may follow it, the mind is almost withered by the influence of the deed it execrates. There is a sorcery in crime of this sort which raises up a spirit of ever-enduring horror.—Such I have ever considered the deed in question; and although I have striven to depict one of its perpetrators in the light through which many of them should, no doubt, be viewed—I could not venture the contact of an intimate connexion with even such a man—lest sympathy for the actor might weaken my abhorrence for the act.

My resolution on reading his letter was then instantly formed. I took a path leading to the village, which was visible below me; and as I

neared the bottom of the descent, a shout of triumph told me that the count had arrived. I looked to the avenue gate, and saw the carriage stop. The countess and her daughter were there in the midst of the crowd. They received in their arms first Stephanie and her husband; and, lastly, I saw the fine figure of the exile bound upon the earth, and rush into the embraces of his wife.

I caught no glimpse of his face; but turning abruptly to the inn, I made my preparations for immediate departure. While my resolution was unshaken, I determined to place myself out of the reach of temptation—so I took my place in a diligence just then passing through the village, and night quickly fell upon me and the scene from which I fled.

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It may appear strange to my readers, but it is, notwithstanding, true, that I am to this day ignorant of the exile's name. Two reasons prevented my becoming acquainted with it—



want of inclination, and want of opportunity. I never asked it from any one ; and being out of the way of public people and events, it never reached me accidentally.

I have, however, made inquiries respecting some other personages connected with this story ; and late accounts from the neighbourhood of the Landes have informed me of some important changes.

Monsieur the inspector, from his unhappy prating propensities, found it utterly impossible to keep secret his connivance at the exile's escape. His own blabbing betrayed what his honest associates never would have divulged ; and in the summary punishment of the day, he was deprived of his place, shorn of his honours, and stripped of every thing but his culinary knowledge ; to which he now owes his support, and devotes his whole attention. He is now, and has been for several years, simply and unadornedly, " La Broche, Traiteur, Restaurateur," at the sign of Le Grand Gourmand, in which the wag of a painter has hit off to the life a likeness of the host himself, and which

hangs over a shabby little shop off one of the Boulevards of Paris—where any of my readers may dine, any or every day in the year, on soup, three dishes, half a bottle of wine, and bread at discretion—for eighteen pence, and a penny to the waiter.

The Forest Inn is no longer in existence. In one of those terrible conflagrations which frequently desolate the pine-woods in those parts, the little inn was burned to the ground. Poor Batiste, its nominal master, fell a victim on this occasion to his old habits. Sleep, which was his greatest enjoyment in life, was also his latest, for he was smothered in his bed, after having resisted every effort of his wife to make him rise from his danger. The disconsolate widow, seeing her house destroyed, and her old protector removed, had nothing left for it but to abandon the site of the one and follow the fortunes of the other,—whose helpmate and partner she now is, under the title of Madame La Broche, and ostensibly his bar-woman, housekeeper, and marketmaker.

Little Jean, the postboy, lost his place, or, as I am told he expressed it, was flung from his saddle, soon after my acquaintance with him. In a general movement of the great political machine, even this poor atom was displaced. —From the postmaster-general down to the postillions, all were turned out, Jean among the rest—when casting his eyes to the capital—like all other aspirants for distinction or intrigue—he worked his passage up to Paris on board the back of a diligence near-wheeler; and is now proprietor and conducteur of one of those little cabriolets which ply between St. Germain and the Place LOUIS QUINZE, and to which people give, among other homely appellations, that of “*les coucous*.”

Geoffroi and Cazille ply their several trades of carrying dry goods between Bordeaux and La Teste, and giving practical essays on population, at the rate of a boy or a girl a year. My correspondent could not tell whether Geoffroi was happy or miserable in his home—but it has been remarked, by almost all who meet him on



the road, that he continually hums one unvarying ditty, the concluding words of which seem to be "Mine own Cazille."

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#### NOTE.

By far the greatest curiosity of the forest of Arcachon, and one, indeed, of the greatest any where, is the chapel of St. Thomas Iliricus, originally built by the contributions of the fishermen of those parts, and dedicated to the Virgin, in gratitude for a miraculous favour conferred upon their neighbourhood in the lifetime of the saint, and somewhat about the year 1521, if the traditionary records of the old people (the only chronicle of the La Testians) be a sufficiently accurate voucher for the date. The venerable Thomas was celebrated, in his time, as a great preacher, and for having exerted his uncommon eloquence against the heretical encroachments, then creeping in upon religion in France; and after sermonizing and anathematizing for some time to little purpose—for the impious work of enlightening the human mind gained ground in spite of his forensic hostility—he resolved on withdrawing from the world, before the vexatious ripening of intellect, which was then in the bud, should overpower, in its blossoming odour, the fragrance of his own sanctity. He, in pursuance of this sage and saintly resolution, turned his steps towards the west.

"The world was all before him where to choose,"

and, passing through the hamlet of La Tête de Buche, the original appellation of La Teste, he arrived on the

borders of the Lake of Arcachon, where he scooped himself a hut, the site of which is still marked out by the pious visitations of many a pilgrim. Thomas was fond of a solitary ramble, which formed, in spite of time or tide, his daily exercise for body and mind. One evening, while pursuing his favourite walk during the continuance of a tempest, that would probably have driven him to his hut, had not a secret inspiration urged him still to keep abroad, he discovered a vessel far out at sea, in great distress and apparently on the eve of perishing. Not being able to render the least possible assistance otherwise than by his prayers, he betook himself to his knees, and had scarcely commenced an impassioned invocation, when the little vessel, as if it had been possessed of the powers of mortal vision, perceived him, and instantly turned its prow towards the spot where he knelt, and with a rush of sail that belonged not to any human management, it cut through the mountain-billows, and in an instant traced its frothy path from the utmost verge of the horizon to the edge of the strand on which the anchorite was placed. He, bewildered and fixed in admiration of the miracle, lost all power of speech, for he beheld upon the prow a bright form robed in white, and surrounded by a radiance that he knew to be of Heaven. The hands of this celestial being were raised above his head, as if something was suspended in them. Its bright wings fluttered a moment in the foam of the waves which sparkled in the sunny tints—an instant more and all was a blank. The vessel had totally disappeared; whether it sunk in the furious element, or “vanished into thin air,” the monk by no means could divine; and all that he heard to give him a clew for unravelling the miracle, was the flapping of wings above him, and a strain of ex-

quisite melody, that seemed to die away in the upper regions of the heavens. Thomas arose from his posture of devotion, and gazed with a holy wonder on the scene around him. The waves were in a moment still—the wind was hushed—the sun darted from the clouds, which were scattered across the firmament in a thousand beautiful and fantastic forms of brightness—the roaring of the surge was changed to the gentle murmur of the tide, as it flowed in upon the sand, and seemed to sink into it, as if in repose from its recent agitation. At the feet of the monk lay a small image of the Virgin. He approached it with a mixture of devotion and awe; when, to his delight and admiration, it sprang up into his arms, where he folded it with a rush of overpowering sensation that may be better imagined than described. He brought the heaven-sent relic to his hut, where he erected a rude altar to its honour; but the rustic inhabitants, thinking such a shrine unworthy the miraculous image, built him a little chapel around the spot. The overflowing of the lake, in one of its accustomed inundations a short time afterwards, levelled the little building to the ground; and when, wonderful to tell, the pious erectors attempted to move the little image from its shrine, which the waves had no power to overthrow, it resisted the efforts of dozens of men to remove it; and it was only by the powerful prayers of Thomas that forty pair of the strongest oxen had force sufficient to effect that object. The image, be it known, is full twelve inches in height! Another chapel was built, and another catastrophe was at hand. It was utterly cast down by one of the moving sand-hills, which spared not in its impious progress the holy place, but the image defied its rage. It stood erect amid the desolation, and was seen in the morning after



the tempest, perched on the topmost point of the mound that covered the ruin. Once more a fitting receptacle was prepared, and that is the present chapel, the simple elegance of whose outward construction, and whose richly-ornamented interior, are remarkable specimens of good taste and gorgeousness blended together with surprising harmony. The desolate wilds around—the profound seclusion of its site—the deep-embowering woods—the superstitious veneration of the simple souls who there offer up their orisons—all the union, in fact, of natural solemnity and religious enthusiasm, give to the place an indescribable and irresistible charm. There is a hermitage close by, inhabited in the summer season by a good and enlightened curate, who is looked on with a veneration more than common, as the direct descendant of the holy Thomas. But it is on the 25th of March, when the *fête* of the village is held, that the traveller, who enjoys such primitive and touching scenes, should place himself at the porch of the chapel, to witness the ceremony of devoting the earliest fish of the season to the Virgin, from whom the image is believed to have been directly sent from Heaven. They believe that it descended directly from Heaven, like the Palladium of the Trojans—or like the Liafail, the enchanted stone brought to Ireland by the first settlers, from which the island received the name of Innisfail.

THE END.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

















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